THE WORKER AND HIS CHURCH

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THE WORKER AND HIS WORK SERIES

A CORRESPONDENCE STUDY COURSE FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL WORKERS

THE WORKER AND HIS CHURCH

By

SAMUEL LYNCH BEILER, PH. D.

Professor of Practical Theology and Acting Dean of the School of Theology of Boston University.

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PREFACE

This little volume is a text-book prepared for the Correspondence Study Courses of the Board of Sunday Schools. The author has tried to keep supreme the purpose of making a text-book, and has suppressed some qualities that might have made it more popular in style and character. There has been no purpose to be original, or to search for original material. It is a condensation of the abundant material mentioned in the bibliography.

The author feels that he should acknowledge the valuable assistance of his daughter, Mary Beiler, B. A. (Boston University), without whose faithful co-operation this work would not have been possible amid so many other pressing duties.

Samuel L. Beiler.

Boston, June, 1910.

PART I

METHODISM IN ENGLAND

CHAPTER

ANTECEDENT CONDITIONS

I. Standpoint

1. **Great Religious Movement.** Methodism is the greatest religious movement of the last three centuries. Through all the changes of government, all the swirls of doctrine, all the development of civilization it has moved steadily on in its mission of evangelizing the world and building up a compact, world-wide Church.

The "History of Methodism," as written by Abel Stevens, is more interesting than fiction, and is full of mental and spiritual inspiration. Upon these well-nigh priceless volumes, and others mentioned in the outlines, this brief study is based.

2. **Part of the Kingdom of God.** Methodism as a great religious movement is a part of the developing Kingdom of God on earth. It is related to all the past history of Christianity. It is the heir of the centuries. It must be treated neither as an isolated phenomenon nor as a tangential movement going nowhere. It is a part of the main current of Christianity to which we may apply the words of the prophet, "Everything shall live whithersoever the river cometh." It is a part of the divine evolution of the race.

Part of Christianity

The divine is sometimes hidden behind the mistakes and wickedness of men, even in the Churches. Still God is ever immanent in history, and His all-pervasive influence is often so apparent that only the blind do not see it. It is in this latter sense that Methodism is called the child of Providence, and that it is said to have been under special divine guidance throughout its history.

Child of Providence

Methodism has never regarded "dogmatic definitions" or particular "ecclesiastical arrangements" as essential to the Church, but has put all emphasis on the spiritual life of the individual—a spiritual life fruiting in holiness of character and a new society on earth. "The Church is a collective form of this life."

3. **Relation to other Churches.** While Methodism has always shown and claimed this mark of the true Church, it has never claimed a monopoly of it. It has always recognized the true Christian Church where this mark is seen. With its great founder, it has always desired a league, offensive and defensive, with all who live in Jesus Christ. At the same time it maintains the necessity of its own forms of activity to its own life and growth. It longs and prays for the spiritual unity of Christendom, while feeling deeply that it can do most for the Kingdom of God on earth by using its own providential methods of work.

Mark of a True Church

4. **Methodism an evolution.** Methodism as a new life in Jesus Christ, first in individuals, and then in a collective society or Church, must be thought of as a growth. The method of the divine is not the fully completed form, and then the life; but first the life, "then the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear." It has been a natural evolution, full of the divine presence and power. This natural growth has been amid conditions, through the agency of characters, alongside of other movements, by a clearer apprehension of truth, and by the adoption of new methods of activity adapted to the tasks set before it, until Methodism has reached its present faith, form, and forcefulness among men.

Methodism a Growth

II. Conditions

1. **Era.** Methodism was born in England in the early part of the eighteenth century. As to the exact day or year, different dates have been contended for. Stevens claims that

"the field preaching of Wesley and Whitefield, in 1739, was the event whence the religious epoch, now current, must date its commencement." It was an era when new life was stirring in men, and old forms of life were showing signs of breaking up. The antecedent conditions that helped to shape Methodism at its birth had been culminating through many years. The fullness of time had now come. In our brief study we can only mention a few of these conditions.

Date

2. Immoralities of the time. It is common to emphasize these, and to show that Methodism was in some sense compelled by them. They were fearful. The passing from the seventeenth to the eighteenth century is described as "a dewless night followed by a sunless morn." The patriotism of Cromwell's day had been succeeded by the profligacy of the era of Charles II. Fearful squalor and poverty existed over against luxury and extravagance. Popular education was unknown. Ignorance, the mother of vice, was prolific. Drunkenness, lotteries, gambling, and nameless debaucheries were prevalent. The theater was "earthly, sensual, devilish." Begging, thieving, assaulting, and highway robbing were everywhere common.

Vice and Crime

But the sighs and groans of humanity for redemption from the power of these evils were ascending to the skies that hear, and beneath all this wickedness "the forces which make for righteousness were slowly but surely recuperating, and a mighty effort was imminent in the religious consciousness and life of the people." Methodism, though not chiefly a moral or reform movement, was an answer to this condition in its purpose to "spread Scriptural holiness" throughout the land.

3. Condition of the Church of England. When the eighteenth century opened the prospects of the Church of England as an institution were said to be bright. Queen Anne (1702-1714), both political parties, and all classes of people were Church partisans, ready to persecute dissenters.

But that is not all that is necessary to the prosperity of a Church. Southey says "the greater part of the Nation had never been converted, for at first one idolatry had been substituted for another; in this they followed their lords; and when the Romish idolatry was expelled, they were left as ignorant of real Christianity as they were found."

Low Spiritual Life

This low spiritual condition of the laity was equaled by that of the clergy. Many of these were ignorant of the Scriptures and entirely lacking in piety. We are told by Gladstone that "the preaching of the gospel . . . had disappeared . . . from the majority of Anglican pulpits." Clergymen frequently had more than one position or living, drawing double or triple salaries, and doing little or no work. They were often absent from their parishes and their cures were entirely neglected. Not all the clergy were immoral, but many were tolerated whose conduct scandalized the Church. Dr. Stoughton quotes a clergyman of that time as saying "that some of the most distinguished coxcombs, drunkards, debauchees, and gamesters who figure at the watering places, and all places of public resort, are young men of the sacerdotal order."

Unfaithful Clergy

It is only just to say that there were good men in the Church of England who wept over these evils, prayed for a revival of piety and faithfulness, and made "efforts for the recovery of dying religion." However, they could not stem the awful currents of irreligion and immorality even within the Church, and these conditions influenced Wesley in requiring that his preachers should be pure in life, students of the Bible, and readers of good literature. He urged the same on all his followers, making purity of heart and holiness of life a central theme in all preaching.

4. Decline in Dissenting bodies. The vital and vigorous leaders among the Dissenting bodies, like Richard Baxter, John Owen, and John Howe, had fallen on sleep, and good men like Philip Doddridge and Isaac Watts were fighting a

losing battle. William Jay says "the Establishment was asleep in the dark, and the Dissenters were asleep in the light." In both cases the sleep was that of death. This made it necessary for John Wesley to care for the converts of the great revival under his own guidance, and to put great stress on spiritual life.

Dissenting Churches Asleep

5. Rise of religious societies. In the midst of such spiritual death and out-breaking immorality, the Spirit of God was at work before Wesley's birth. Even before the close of the seventeenth century people, realizing the need of the time and their own responsibility, were meeting and forming societies for prayer and exhortation, the singing of hymns, and conference on practical religious work for children, and for the poor and suffering. It is said that forty-two of these "societies" existed in London and its vicinity, and that they were springing up in all parts of England. The existence of such "societies" evidently led John Wesley, as a loyal Churchman, to use this form of organization for his followers, instead of forming a new Church; and to his retaining the name "Society" for his organization.

Organized Life

6. A new Bible study. Every new, forward, aggressive movement in the history of Christianity has been connected with a fresh study of the Word of God. A study of the Bible prepared the way for Methodism. There was already a little group of Protestants in Germany known as Bible Christians. Pietism, that had become so subjective as to neglect an external revelation, was turning to the Bible again. The Reformation had put the Bible in the place of the Church as the final religious authority. But there was not a clear conception of what the Bible was, nor of the laws of Biblical interpretation. It was found that the interpretation of the Bible could not be left to the unlearned, nor indeed to the individual. There came to be Church interpretations in the form of Confessions, Creeds, and Dogmas, and these became the real exter-

The Bible

nal authority. Preaching was dogmatic, and to be orthodox was more important than to be spiritually alive. Now there was a reaction from that position. There were those who believed with John Robinson "that more light is to break out of God's Word." Matthew Henry (1662-1714) gave the world his great commentary. Bengel (1687-1752) held that the Scriptures, which of themselves contain all knowledge that is essential to the thought and life of the Church, must ever be subject to fresh interpretation. To this work he gave himself and produced his "Gnomon," on which Wesley leaned hard in writing his "Notes on the New Testament." In England little groups of Christians were meeting here and there for the study of the Word, and in one such meeting John Wesley heard them read from Luther's "Introduction to Romans," and his heart was strangely warmed. It was only natural that the earnest religious students of Oxford in their Holy Club should be led to join this movement of Bible study, and that John Wesley should put less emphasis on the dogmas of the Church, and more on the Scriptures as confirmed and interpreted by experience.

7. Spirit of freedom. There was a new spirit of freedom, a sense of liberty, abroad also. In one direction it was preparing for the French Revolution. In another it was fostering the Revolution in America. This spirit of liberty fretted against the bars of Papal authority and of Calvinistic decrees. A recent author, the Rev. Charles R. Brown, says, "Every great revival in the past has had some dominant idea which in its essence embodied a strong demand for personal righteousness." In the revival under John Wesley it was human freedom. Men can vote in the great election. "Whosoever will may come." Doubtless this rising spirit of freedom helped Methodism to be Arminian instead of Calvinistic, and to ever emphasize the freedom of individual choice in religion.

Man Free to Choose

8. Other new movements. The era of the rise of Methodism was a time when other movements that have been influ-

ential in later times were coming to power, and yet others were in their beginnings. Inventions and discoveries were introducing man to a larger world and thereby stimulating him to a larger life. Manufacturing and mining, still in their infancy, were forecasting a commercial age. Travel, still without railroads, was beginning to demand better highways.

Life was Waking

The poor and inefficient schools were awakening an appreciation of education, and there was a new stir in the intellectual life of many. In politics there were cross-currents and confusion, but the rights of king and people were being adjusted, and the House of Commons and the Prime Minister were emerging. The "Tatler" and the "Spectator" were pouring a cleaner stream of thinking into English life, and Locke, Clarke, and Berkeley were keeping philosophical thought astir. All these movements helped to prepare society for a new religious awakening such as John Wesley led in the early part of the eighteenth century.

9. Change in thought. Previously the supernatural had been set over against the natural. It was thought that there was a royal battle on between them. Religion as a product of the supernatural was thought to be contrary to man's nature. Religion had to do its work by breaking down and subduing nature. Then some began to see that such a relation of the supernatural and the natural was unnatural, and swung over to the position that religion was natural, and tried to account for it without the supernatural, even banishing the supernatural to a sky-parlor, leaving nature to do everything.

Deism

Churchmen were influenced by English Deism so that an Anglican Bishop complained of Wesley that "he believed that God's Spirit was still in the world miraculously renewing the hearts of men!" Bishop Butler told Wesley that "belief in the immediate guidance of God's Spirit was a horrid—a very horrid thing."

Still there were writers who taught, that while the super-

natural was quite distinct from the natural, it was working through the natural, at least at times, and in harmony with it, to accomplish its purposes. This gave John Wesley the philosophical basis for his conception of God's relation to the world, and especially for his faith in the Holy Spirit's work in man's nature,—illuminating, convicting, regenerating, empowering, and guiding it amid the mazes of life, while witnessing to the soul its adoption into God's family as a child and heir. The teaching of Methodism brought God home again to His world and to the hearts of His children.

God's Relation to Man

It was only necessary for all these influences to converge under God's Spirit in the young hearts gathered together in the Oxford Club to make it a blazing focus from which would go out a flame of fire into all the world.

Lesson Outline:

I. Standpoint.
   1. A great religious movement.
   2. A part of the Kingdom of God.
   3. Relation to other Churches.
   4. Methodism an evolution.

II. Conditions.
   1. Era.
   2. Immoralities of the time.
   3. Condition of the Church of England.
   4. Decline in Dissenting bodies.
   5. Rise of religious "Societies."
   6. A new Bible study.
   7. The spirit of freedom.
   8. Change of thought.

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Abel Stevens, "History of Methodism."
Townsend, Workman and Eayrs, "New History of Methodism."
Stoughton, "History of Religion in England."

Topics for Special Study:

1. The origin of other dissenting Churches.
2. Social life in England when Methodism was born.
3. The literature of 1700 to 1739.

Topics for Class Discussion:

1. What is the place of Methodism in modern religious history?
2. To what extent is Methodism an unrelated religious movement?
3. What is the attitude of Methodism toward other Churches?
4. Describe the moral conditions amid which the Methodist movement arose.
5. What is to be said of religious conditions at the same period?
6. What signs of spiritual promise were evident at this time?
7. How did the new spirit of freedom aid Methodism?
8. What other movements were arising which helped to make Methodism possible?
9. Tell something of the thought currents of the time.

CHAPTER II

THE BIRTH OF METHODISM

I. Methodism a New Life.

Methodism was and is a revival of spiritual life. When Watts was writing, "religion is dying in the world," God was preparing for a revival of spiritual life in the Christian Church that would grow beyond all expectation. The beginnings of this new spiritual life may well be called a birth. The beginnings, the quickenings, the coming to consciousness, and the early manifestations of this new life, divide themselves naturally into four periods.

Methodism a Revival

1. **The beginnings of the new spiritual life.** A Methodist, who holds with the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, "that all children, by virtue of the unconditional benefits of the atonement, are members of the Kingdom of God," can not conclude that there was no spiritual life preparing for the Wesleyan revival before the time when Whitefield's soul was filled with the joy of salvation, Charles Wesley's mind was settled in a peace that passed understanding, or John Wesley's heart was strangely warmed within him. To be a "member of the Kingdom of God" implies at least what Bishop Gilbert Haven called "a germinal spiritual life." Such a "germinal spiritual life" in John Wesley and Charles Wesley was cultured in the helpful environment of the Epworth Rectory. The family was the heir of religious generations. The father was an evangelical of his day, preached a "genuine gospel," "charmed with his godliness," sang in life "Behold the Savior of Mankind," and died saying, "I shall be satisfied

"Germinal Spiritual Life"

when I awake with Thy likeness! Satisfied! Satisfied!" The mother, Susannah, was a "Saint Teresa" and a "Holy Mother" combined. Abel Stevens has told quite fully the story of the Wesley family, drawing upon Adam Clarke for an appreciative painting of the mother of John and Charles. She was beautiful, cultured, refined, independent in thinking, well balanced in judgment, deeply religious, highly spiritual. Her house, in which nineteen children were born and thirteen were living at one time, was a "domestic Church, a family school, and a genuine old English home." She has been called the "Mother of Methodism." "Germinal spiritual life" would not die in such an atmosphere. After John had been rescued from the burning rectory just as the roof fell in, she wrote of him, "I do intend to be more particularly careful of the soul of this child, . . . to instill into his mind the principles of true religion." Under such influences and training the boys were fathers of the men they became. Tyerman concluded that at eleven years of age, "John Wesley entered the Charterhouse a saint"—surely a boy saint, and withal, one who had already learned to think. It is a pity the famous Charterhouse school, home of Steele and Addison, while culturing "virtue and good-breeding," was not as spiritual in atmosphere as the Rectory at Epworth, and so both John and Charles Wesley failed to develop their spiritual powers as they did their mental faculties while there.

Home Life

2. **The quickenings of the spiritual life.** Evidently these took place at Oxford. The college is not merely a place for study. It is the focus of all the thought-life of the age. It is hot with the ferment of ideas,—electric with the thrills of life. The clash and flash of disciplined and awakening minds start inspirations that find quick and warm reception in the chivalrous and impetuous hearts of young men.

College Life

Oxford was not at its best when the Wesleys were there. Pattison says it "had ceased from the proper functions of a University." Adam Smith, who went up to Balliol in 1740,

tells how "the greater part of the public professors have for these many years given up altogether the practice of teaching." There was doubtless much of unbelief, irreligion, and immorality among the students. Still it was a place of stimulus to both mental and religious life, a place where young minds and souls were awakening. Hither came young men from the rural sections, towns and cities, who were later felt in the world's work—Ingham, the Yorkshire evangelist; Kinchin, the good rector of Dummer; Gambold, the Moravian Bishop; Clayton, the High Churchman of Manchester; Broughton, of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge; Hervy, author of the "Meditations;" Morgan, the leader in Christian activities; Whitefield, the flaming evangelist of two worlds; John Wesley, the founder of Methodism; Charles Wesley, its bard, and a little later, Coke, its foreign minister; and all were soon in a tumult of awakening thought and religious need. Such books as "The Imitation of Christ," "Holy Living," the "Serious Call," and the "Life of God in the Soul of Man" led them to see that religion was seated in the heart, and must be supreme in their lives. In the absence of John Wesley while helping his father, Charles Wesley began to gather congenial spirits into a Holy Club. They were soon called Methodists, because, as Charles Wesley said, they "agreed to observe with strict formality the method of study and practice laid down in the Statutes of the University." On John Wesley's return to Oxford as a Fellow of Lincoln College, he became leader of these earnest souls. Their methods of life became more religious and exacting. They sought to be alone for meditation and prayer each morning and evening. They spent together several evenings in each week, often as high as six, reading the Greek classics and especially the New Testament in Greek. They fasted twice a week and took the sacrament weekly. Rules for Holy Living were common among the pious in those days, and John Wesley drew up a rigid system for the club—a system much

Oxford

Holy Club

like the spiritual exercises of Loyola. Out of these in process of time and change grew the Rules in the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Morgan led the club into visiting the sick, the prisoners in jail, and in collecting and teaching the peasant children.

Surely these young men were "very religious," as Paul said of the Athenians. There was not only spiritual unrest, but there were spiritual longings, and a genuine spiritual life.

Quickening Life

They had a desire for a fuller knowledge of God, but they could not find Him by groping in external rites and ascetic rules. They needed another experience that should come in another way to bring them out into the full light of His presence.

3. The conscious experience of spiritual life in Christ. It seems strange to us to-day that young men brought up as the Wesleys were, and earnest students of the Word as all these young men were, should not more easily learn the way of life. But their ecclesiasticism misled them; their tendencies to asceticism, and to the mysticism, not of the inner life, but of the solitude and the desert, blinded them. Their eyes must needs be opened in the world of struggle and experience outside of Oxford.

On October 14, 1735, the Wesleys sailed with Oglethorpe to Georgia, Charles as secretary to the governor, and John as missionary to the Indians. Finding work among the Indians impracticable at that time, they turned to the Colonists. But their rigid ascetic and ecclesiastical rules could not be accepted under the new world conditions. In a year Charles Wesley returned home to England, by the way of Boston, where he preached in King's Chapel. John Wesley, after nearly three years, was back in England on February 1, 1738. Meantime, he had appealed to George Whitefield to join him in the work in America, and as Wesley approached England Whitefield sailed for the New World.

Mission to Georgia

(a) New spiritual awakening. However, Whitefield had

entered into a conscious experience of spiritual life in Christ just seven weeks after Easter, 1735, a few months before the Wesleys sailed for America. His intense soul could not rest without the peace of God. Day and night he prayed in such an agonizing struggle that his health was impaired. At last, almost in despair, he threw himself on the mercy of God in Jesus Christ for forgiveness, salvation, and life. The change that came to him was marvelous. "O," he exclaimed, "with what joy, joy unspeakable, even joy that was full of glory, was my soul filled when the weight of sin fell off, and an abiding sense of the pardoning love of God, and a full assurance of faith broke in upon my disconsolate soul!"

Whitefield's Experience

(b) Similar experience of Charles Wesley. Charles Wesley's perilous journey home from America supplied vivid imagery for many of his verses, and deepened the restlessness of his soul that was still without the peace of God. On reaching London he put himself under the influence of the Moravians, and the guidance especially of Peter Bohler. They led him to see more clearly the way of salvation. It was not by works but by faith. His faith was not blind but intelligent. Through reading of the Scriptures, much wrestling in prayer, and the clear testimony of Mr. Bray, a "poor, ignorant mechanic, who knows nothing but Christ," and the help of Bray's sister, timid Mrs. Turner, he was enabled to believe, and on May 21, 1738, "found himself at peace with God, standing by faith, confident of Christ's protection."

The Way of Peace to Charles Wesley

(c) The new experience of John Wesley. John Wesley had been passing through a somewhat similar experience. On his way to America he had been impressed by the simple faith and childlike trust of the Moravians in times of danger, and in Georgia had met the Moravian Spangenberg, a scholar of Jena and lecturer at Halle, who had asked him pointed questions about his personal knowledge of Jesus Christ as his Savior. On his return to England he wrote in his Jour-

nal, "I who went to America to convert others was never converted." Years later he wrote in the margin, "I am not sure of this." We are not sure. He certainly did not have the assurance of faith that brings peace with God. He had become "resolved to seek it unto the end, not by works on which he had been depending, but by "continual prayer." He also conversed with Bohler, the Moravian, and heard Moravians testify to the joy of faith. On May 21st he went to see Charles, who had just found peace in believing. On the 24th, at five in the morning, he read, "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature." In the evening he went unwillingly to one of the "religious societies" in Aldersgate Street. Here he heard some one read Luther's description of "the change God works in the heart through faith in Jesus Christ," and to quote his own words: "I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation, and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death." Hugh Price Hughes said, "On that day Methodism, as history knows it, was born." Lecky, the historian, says it marked "an epoch in English history."

John Wesley Receives the Assurance of Faith

Birth of Methodism

II. Manifestations of the New Life.

1. **The preaching of the new experience.** All the leaders in Methodism were now in possession of conscious life in Christ, peace with God and a joy unspeakable and full of glory. They began to preach this new experience with wonderful power. Finding the churches closed against them, and multitudes eager to hear the message, they took to the open air and in fields, market places, cemeteries, streets, preached Jesus as the Savior of all who will believe in Him and accept Him as Lord. Converts multiplied and were organized into "Bands" and "Soci-

Life Manifested

eties" for worship and instruction. The Foundery in Moorfields, London, was opened for worship on November 11, 1739; a "preaching house" was built in Bristol; thus Methodism was born and started on its marvelous career.

Lesson Outline:

I. Methodism a New Life.
   1. The beginnings of the new spiritual life.
   2. The quickenings of the spiritual life.
   3. The conscious experience of the spiritual life.
      a. The new experience of Whitefield.
      b. The new experience of Charles Wesley.
      c. The new experience of John Wesley.

II. Manifestations of the New Life.
   1. Preaching of the new experience.

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Abel Stevens, "History of Methodism."
Tyerman, "Life and Times of John Wesley."
James, "Varieties of Religious Experience."

Topics for Special Study:

1. Types of conversion.
2. The authority of experience in the Christian life.

Topics for Class Discussion:

1. Describe the religious conditions which prevailed at Epworth.
2. What about the early religious experience of John Wesley?
3. Characterize conditions at Oxford at this time.
4. What was the Holy Club?
5. How is the unsatisfied spiritual longing of the members of the Holy Club to be explained?
6. Tell of the new experience of Whitefield and the Wesleys.
7. How did the new life manifest itself?

CHAPTER III

LEADING CHARACTERS

I. Leaders.

Every great movement among men incarnates itself in one or more strong characters. It comes to fruition through them, and they become noted in history through it. Such characters in the early history of Methodism were George Whitefield, Charles Wesley, and John Wesley. Many of their associates and successors in Methodism in England are worthy of study, but can only be mentioned in this brief history.

Three Noted Men

1. **George Whitefield.** George Whitefield, whose early life and experience have been described, was the orator—evangelist of early Methodism. In the very early years he overshadowed even John Wesley himself. He was ordained and began to preach when twenty-two years of age. At twenty-six he was one of the most brilliant and popular preachers of modern times. His scholarship was not of the highest type, and the few sermons left by him are not of the best quality. But "the hearts of the people as he passed swayed as the reeds sway in the blast." It is said that fifteen people were driven mad by his first sermon, and it so improved them that the Bishop hoped their madness would be lasting. He was soon preaching on week days as well as Sundays. Churches were so crowded constables had to be put at the doors to restrain the people. However, Churchmen neither approved his preaching nor its effects. Soon Dean and Chancellor practically forbade his preaching in any of the pulpits of the

Eloquence of Whitefield

diocese. This only drove him out to a larger liberty and made him the free lance of two continents, preaching everywhere. We can not follow him in detail. In Wales he joined hands with Howell Harris and the Presbyterian Church of Wales is the result. On returning to London as many as twenty and thirty thousand heard him in Moorfields and on Kensington Common. Like a shuttle he crossed the Atlantic eleven times, and exciting revivals followed him everywhere. He was like a comet flying across all recognized ecclesiastical orbits. His deep emotion, mighty impulses, and uncontrolled enthusiasm needed continents for freedom. His eloquence was wonderful; he had great personal magnetism; his was a regal imagination; his deep-toned, clear voice was perfect music; he was a great soul aflame with the divine; a heart all aglow with love for the world that so often showed its hatred in stones, drums, bells, and baitings; a man with such an "intensity of passionate utterance" that he and his hearers were carried away by "the storm of feeling his eloquence provoked."

Outdoor Preaching

Activities

His break with Wesley on account of Calvinism, and his owning slaves in connection with his orphanage in Georgia, must be set down to the times in which he lived, and they do not detract from the high estimate of his character and work which John Wesley gave of him after his death at Newburyport, Mass., September 30, 1770, where he closed his thirty-one years of restless, strenuous evangelism. His Calvinism opened doors and hearts in Wales, Scotland, and New England that were closed to all Arminians. Perhaps Whitefield's greatest permanent work was twofold: awakening new life in the Calvinistic Churches, and breaking ground for the Arminian Methodists who followed him everywhere.

Death

2. Charles Wesley. Charles Wesley was the eighteenth child of Samuel and Susannah Wesley, born December 18, 1707. He was a student and graduate of Oxford, founder of

the Holy Club, and a mighty evangelist, facing mobs and dangers with lion-like courage, and leading multitudes to the Savior. He sometimes rose to heights of power in preaching unsurpassed by either George Whitefield or John Wesley. He was strongly swayed by his own feelings, and at his best swayed his audiences with passionate power. However, his poetic nature and practice led him in later years to depend on the inspiration of the hour, and he sometimes failed utterly when trying to preach.

Preacher

He was the sweet singer of the great revival. In his soul the new experiences burst into song. He gave the world 6,500 poetical compositions. His "human hymns," as set over against the Psalms then used in the Churches, were quickly popular with the out-door congregations of new converts. Green says: "His hymns expressed the fiery conviction of its converts in lines so chaste and beautiful that its more extravagant features disappeared. The wild throes of hysteric enthusiasm passed into a passion for hymn-singing, and a new musical impulse was aroused in the people which gradually changed the face of public devotion throughout England."

Hymn Writer

Influence

All phases of Christian experience were sung by him; all Methodist doctrines were made clear and defended in his lines; and through all, the life and fire, love and joy, of the Methodist revival breathed. His strength of wing, vigor of stroke, height of flight, perfection of motion, and ease of poise have never been surpassed.

His Hymns

Others also sang in this revival period. Watts was almost Charles Wesley's equal; John Wesley made translations and wrote chaste and stately verses; Williams gave us "Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah;" Cennick left us, "Thou great Redeemer, dying Lamb;" Olivers chanted "The God of Abraham praise," and Perronet sang, "All hail the power of Jesus' name;" but Charles Wesley was and is the Bard of Methodism, the hymnist of all Christendom.

Other Hymn Writers

3. John Wesley. Born in Epworth, June 17, (O. S.) 1703, John Wesley was born to command. In the home he was taught reverence, piety, chivalry, to endure hardness, to be methodical, and to think. The Westminster School, where he was studying Hebrew at sixteen, the Charterhouse, and Oxford, could only further unfold these brave qualities. The Holy Club, his lectures in Oxford, and his "moderating" at class disputations gave him further training as a leader.

Natural Leader

Though George Whitefield and Charles Wesley were awakened before he was, and Whitefield was the first of the three to begin out-door preaching, yet John Wesley was soon the recognized leader. Green, the historian, says he "embodied in himself the very movement" called Methodism; Gladstone refers to him as that "extraordinary man whose life and acts have taken their place in the religious history not only of England, but of Christendom;" and Macaulay compared his "genius for government" with that of Richelieu.

John Wesley was a persistent reader. He was not only a more than ordinary student through all his Oxford days, but he continued to read all kinds of literature, and especially such "as warm, kindle, and enlarge the affections, and awaken the divine sense in the soul;" and, like the bee, he drew honey from all. He was well-balanced, a man of remarkable poise of character and judgment. While he was an eclectic, assimilating kindred elements of truth from all sources, he was

Well-poised Scholar

well-poised enough to reject the morbid elements in à Kempis and Taylor; the extremes of high Calvinism and anti-nomianism; the casuistry to which the rules for the Holy Club tended; the passivity, "favor of solitude," and mystic "call of the desert," seen among the mystics; the High Church idiosyncrasies that defeated him in Georgia; and the youthful missionary conception that the heathen "are as little children, humble, willing to learn, and eager to do the will of God."

He had a peculiar power of personality. Without White-

field's imagination and impassioned utterance, or Charles Wesley's torrent of violent emotion, he yet stirred and conquered the crowds that listened to him with a power beyond theirs. Standing quietly in the midst of intense excitement, his clear, even voice seemed to search out the hearts and consciences of his hearers. For fifty years he maintained an uninterrupted evangelism. The passion of rescuing men, like a fire in his soul, was as steady as mighty. Great crowds of five, ten, and fifteen thousand heard him gladly and were mightily moved. Wonderful physical demonstrations were sometimes seen, such as "violent agonies," "physical prostrations," "men and women falling down as dead," and "coming to themselves with shouts of salvation;" but these were largely in the earlier years of Wesley's ministry, and either ceased after a time, or the great emotions took the higher form of singing. The greatest effects of Wesley's preaching, however, were not the physical, that quickly passed away; nor the emotional, apt to be evanescent; but the spiritual and ethical, manifest in holier and happier lives consecrated to service. In this evangelistic work Wesley traveled 250,000 miles over execrable roads, and preached an average of fifteen times a week, often facing violent mobs, escaping from dangers, and enduring hardships as if he had a charmed life.

Personal Power

Preacher and Evangelist

His power as a preacher has been difficult to analyze and explain. He was not built like Luther or Brooks. His height was five feet five inches; his weight, one hundred and twenty-two pounds. He was very different from his brother Charles and from George Whitefield, who so mightily swayed congregations. He seemed to lack the qualities that made them so mighty, and yet in his quiet, serene way, he controlled men and moved audiences, beyond all others for full fifty years. He was a prepared personality full of charm and power. What Adam Clarke wrote of as Wesley's "deep intimacy with God," and Matthew Arnold as "a genius for godliness," and Wesley him-

Power as Preacher

self as "the spiritual sensation of the soul," were seen in that sense of God which he carried with him and awakened in others. His power was that of a serene spiritual personality set on lofty spiritual purposes.

Wesley's passion for saving men was equaled by his pas sion for educating them. "His schools for the Colonists in Georgia, for the colliers in Kingswood, for the orphans in Newcastle, for the poor about the Foundry in London, and for "the sons of his own preachers," were proofs of this. "He founded and taught in Sunday-schools in Georgia," co-operated with Robert Raikes, and encouraged the Sunday-school movement among his Societies in England.

Educator

Meanwhile he became the "pioneer publisher of cheap literature," not cheap in quality, but the best in briefer, cheaper form. The Methodist revival caused a great intellectual awakening and Wesley tried to meet the needs of the poor, yet mentally hungry multitudes. Four hundred publications, a working library for his followers, were soon on the market and the circulation was enormous. The influence on England can not be measured. His published "Sermons" and "Notes on the New Testament," along with the "Minutes," became the standards of Methodist doctrine.

Author and Publisher

Wesley was a social reformer; we might almost say a Christian Socialist. He taught the equality of men, cultured the altruistic feelings, insisted upon a sense of responsibility for others, and gave great impulse to humanitarian feelings and movements. He agitated prison reform, worked with Howard against slavery, wrote against war, urged the prohibition of all distilling, condemned the liquor traffic, and all waste and luxury as causes of misery among the poor. Among his schemes were "labor homes, work for the unemployed, poor men's banks and loan offices, medical dispensaries, and stations for the use of newly discovered electrical apparatus."

Reformer

Wesley was an organizer. Field preaching soon resulted in many scattered converts. Wesley saw that these converts must have care and fellowship. He early resolved "not to strike one stroke in any place where I can not follow the blow." He adopted some forms of organization already in existence, adapted others to the needs of his work, created still others as circumstances demanded, and combined all together in an organization which he so animated as to make all work together for the extension of the revival and the conservation of its results. So field-preaching was quickly followed by Societies for Christian fellowship, which were subdivided into Bands; then came the Classes and Class Meetings, providing a sub-lay-pastorate and a "bulwark of spiritual freedom" and fellowship. Love feasts, watch-night services, covenant services, stewards to care for the current receipts, lay preaching by those who became local preachers, and then the itinerancy followed with chapels, circuits, and Conferences. The Conference in England was a combination of parliament, cabinet, and court; the crown and sum of the Methodist system. It became an annual gathering: the mainspring and regulator of all activities.

Organizer

4. Other leaders. Wesley had many notable helpers in those early years. Among the lay-preachers was John Nelson (1707-1783), the converted stone mason, of robust physique, strong emotions, quick intelligence, fine character, apostolic labors. Among the Church of England clergymen who helped Wesley was John Fletcher (1729-1783), originally from Switzerland, the vicar of Madeley, the saint of Methodism, a man of rare talents, the defender of Arminianism with "logic on fire," the St. John and St. Paul of the Wesleyan movement; whose wife, Mary Fletcher, equaled him in saintliness, her "Life" being one of the treasures of Methodism. In the regular ranks of the itinerancy were such men as Thomas Coke, the incarnation of foreign missionary sentiment; Samuel Bradburn, the Demosthenes of Methodism; William Bramwell, the most successful soul-

Helpers

winner, and Adam Clarke and John Benson, the scholars of the movement.

II. Methodism at Wesley's Death.

When Wesley died, March 2, 1791, in his eighty-eighth year, the total number of Methodists was 136,000, and the adherents were estimated at from 800,000 to 1,000,000. All England and America had felt his influence. Augustine Birrell has said: "No single figure influenced so many minds, no single voice touched so many hearts. No other man did such a life-work for England."

Lesson Outline:

I. Leaders.
  1. George Whitefield.
  2. Charles Wesley.
  3. John Wesley.
    a. Natural leader and well-poised scholar.
    b. Preacher and evangelist.
    c. Spiritual personality.
    d. Author and publisher.
    e. Educator and reformer.
    f. Organizer.
  4. Other leaders.

II. Methodism at Wesley's Death.

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Topics for Special Study:

1. The literary leaders of Wesley's time.
2. The political leaders of Wesley's time.

Topics for Class Discussion:

1. Give important particulars concerning the work of Whitefield.
2. Describe the service of Charles Wesley to Methodism.
3. What were the qualities possessed by John Wesley which qualified him for leadership?
4. Characterize John Wesley as a preacher.
5. What means beside preaching did Wesley use to advance Methodism?
6. In what ways did Wesley exercise his genius as an organizer?
7. Name some of the most notable of Wesley's assistants.
8. What was the status of Methodism at Wesley's death?

CHAPTER IV

DEVELOPMENTS AND DIVISIONS

I. Development of Methodism in England.

1. The necessity for separation. By the time of Wesley's death Methodism had become a compact body. He did not desire it to become a separate Church in England, but in order to conserve the results of the revival that in its influence extended over England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland, he was compelled to take step after step toward separation. By 1791 many changes had taken place in England that affected the separation.

Not a Church but a Power

(a) Civil changes. Unjust laws against Dissenting Bodies and Dissenters were beginning to be repealed. The mob spirit, once prevalent, was dying out. Manners were improving, amusements were transformed, drinking decreased, farming was more productive, trade extended, manufacturing multiplied, literature reached a higher level of excellence. Johnson, Gray, Goldsmith, Cowper, Burns, Gibbon, Reid, Adam Smith, Paley, and others were stirring the thought of the times. The war between France and England resulted in America becoming English and not French; the French Revolution, breaking up, and breaking from, the past, shook England and stirred the spirit of liberty everywhere; and the American Revolution showed that man could be free under a stable self-government. How all this affected the freedom and separateness of Methodism can easily be seen by the thoughtful student.

Improved Conditions

Civil Changes Helpful

Dr. Townsend suggests two illustrations of how small changes affected Methodism. Wesley would not interfere

with the Church of England by holding meetings during the hours of Church services. So Methodism was driven to the evening hours. "The increase of illuminants, lighting of streets, and concentration of population" in growing towns and cities made the evening the popular service among the working classes, and aided the success of Methodism. The construction of roads and canals brought the English people out of their provincialism into a real nationalism; and the possibility of communication prevented Methodism from breaking up into local churches in different districts, and made unity practical by its connectional and itinerant policy. Methodism became one in experience and in aggressiveness of spirit.

(b) Religious changes. The incessant efforts of Wesley and Whitefield in evangelizing the neglected multitudes had been multiplied by their use of lay preachers. By 1744 there were forty of these devoted and efficient helpers, and by 1791 many more, and Wesley, by his itinerant plan kept his preachers moving from one charge to another about every six months, and in each charge the preacher had a circuit of many preaching places. Revivals were almost constant, and the growth of the societies rapid. There had been mobs and literary caricatures from the outside, and troubles on the inside as well, but the spiritual life was manifesting itself everywhere. "The novelty, verve, and swiftness of the Methodist movement made it attractive." The Church of England was influenced, and a number of the clergy became spiritual and evangelistic, but the Church of England would not in any way recognize the Methodist societies or ministers. M. Taine was doubtless right in suggesting that the Methodist revival saved England from a revolution like that of France. Lecky, the historian, agreed with him in this judgment. It was a vitalizing agency in all reform and philanthropic work. Methodism had wrought "a transformation in the colliers of the north and southwest, the mill-workers of Yorkshire and Lancashire, and the fishermen of

Lay Preachers

Revivals

Strength

the east and west coasts." Wealthy Methodists were springing up in all parts of England, and the support given to religious workers was slowly increasing from sixty to one hundred or more dollars a year. The first Methodist Sunday-school was organized in 1769, and at John Wesley's death it is thought 200,000 pupils were gathered in the schools. And with well-built churches, an enthusiastic ministry, and well-organized membership, Methodism in 1791 could say in the words of the dying Wesley, "The best of all is, God is with us." It was naturally more and more independent of the State Church.

2. Forming an organization. John Wesley had been a loved and revered leader for so long, that he had become an autocratic ruler, not by assertion of right, but of service. He presided in Conferences and after discussion decided all matters; he admitted, appointed, and excluded preachers; he owned chapels and other Church property. It was naturally feared that on his death all would fall to pieces, and the Methodist movement become a thing of the past. But Wesley was too wise to allow this to occur, and he took steps to prevent it.

Wesley a Ruler

(a) Men associated with Wesley. He gathered about him a group of remarkable men. They have been called the "Inner Cabinet." They came to possess his spirit, and to be bound together in thorough unity. Atmore, Bradburn, Bradford, Benson, Coke, Clarke, Mather, Moore, Olivers, Pawson, Taylor, and Thompson were like twelve apostles in association with their leader. He trusted them, and they were true to his trust.

"Inner Cabinet"

(*b*) *Ordinations.* Wesley ordained more than two-score preachers to administer baptism and the Lord's Supper, some for England, some for Scotland, some for America, and the mission fields. Some of these were among the men named above. He was driven to this by the need of his people, and by anticipation of the vital question about the sacraments that arose afterward.

(c) Wesley's deed. But chiefly, Wesley drew up a "Deed of Declaration and Establishment," which was enrolled in the High Court of Chancery, March 9, 1784. All rights and powers were transferred to the Conference, composed of one hundred preachers whom Wesley named. The carrying out of the provisions of this Deed, and the later Plan of Pacification, separated the Methodists from the Church of England. As a separate Church made permanent for evangelism, it now went on its mission to spread holiness over the land.

Deed of Declaration

3. After Wesley's death.

(a) Early leaders. After Wesley's death the older leaders soon passed away and new ones arose, but the Conference formed by his "Deed" held steadily to its purpose and plan. Difficult questions arose and agitations disturbed the peace of the societies, but the men who had been trained under Wesley had caught his spirit and the inner meaning of his methods, and were determined that the work should go on as he had planned. Their rich experience of God's grace and their high spirituality kept their evangelistic zeal ablaze.

Agitations but Unity

Richard Watson, author of the "Institutes," and missionary secretary; Jabez Bunting, missionary secretary, a statesman in the growing body, and president of its Theological Institution; Robert Newton, preacher on special occasions with mighty eloquence, and so popular he had to be released from regular work to go everywhere with his great messages, and William Arthur, the greatly beloved author of the "Tongue of Fire," were pilots of the movement who brought it through troubled waters.

(b) Growth. The above were leaders, but in the rank and file of preachers and laymen the evangelistic spirit burned also and revivals were common. Especially in 1815 and 1823 did revivals of wonderful power bless the societies and add thousands to the body. In spite of a decrease in numbers in

1830, and some agitations concerning polity and practice that were not helpful, by 1848 there were in Great Britain and the foreign stations 459,454 members and 1,726 ministers.

Home Missions had been begun in Wales in 1800, were made more extensive by Dr. Coke in 1806, and soon became very successful. The first Foreign Missionary meeting was held by Dr. Coke in 1813, and by 1848 ten, twenty, and thirty missionaries were going to the foreign fields in a single year. The Book Committee was appointed in 1793, and with the appearance of Clarke's "Commentary" and Watson's "Theological Institutes" its work grew in strength and influence. The educational work was prosperous. The ecclesiastical status of the body was settled. Methodism was a Church, one in doctrine, aim, and life.

Growth and Strength

4. Dark days but new movements. The middle of the century is sometimes spoken of as the dark day of Methodism in England. There were agitations and convulsions, spiced with personal resentment and retaliation over the relations between the laity and the ministry in the administration of the business of the Church. The old order gradually passed away with the older leaders, and the laity was given legitimate functions and enlarged opportunities. William Morley Punshon, a great orator and master of sentences, raised by gifts and lectures more than $50,000 to build chapels at seaside resorts. New life was thrown into the work in the army and navy; a Children's Home was founded by Thomas B. Stephenson; an order of Deaconesses arose to do good service in mission fields and among the sick, among women in trouble, and girls in peril. The evangelistic spirit had somewhat waned, though the philanthropic work kept self-denial alive, and conserved forces for a new movement that has given new life to English Methodism.

Lay Representation

Deaconesses

5. The forward movement. The shifting of population left many chapels empty and great masses of people with-

out the gospel being brought home to them. Good men were stirred to thought. As they mused the fire burned. Charles Prest of the Home Mission Fund disliked the consolidation of Churches that was going on and determined to carry Methodism into new localities. Charles Garrett, of strong convictions and a master of pathos, stirred Manchester and Liverpool with his mission work, and aroused Methodism to a sense of responsibility for the sin and misery of the world.

Prest and Garrett

Then arose Hugh Price Hughes, an Oxford man, fluent in speech, insatiable of work, a fighting man by nature, and aflame with evangelistic zeal. He could not be content with his early ideal of being a literary preacher. A taste of the joy of seeing men saved made him an evangelist. He was quick to discern and seize the strategic, and even the spectacular. When appointed to the West Central Mission, London, St. James Hall, Piccadilly, was taken, and the work kept in a variety of ways before the public. As a result a passion for halls and mission centers arose, until some forty of these are now doing splendid work among the masses of the cities, maintaining the evangelistic spirit, while developing social and philanthropic agencies of all kinds.

Hugh Price Hughes

Meanwhile new attention was given to the villages that were springing up everywhere. This necessitated changes in the circuits, so as to relieve the weaknesses of the unrelated units by a system of combined strength. Various "Funds" strengthened the work of building chapels and of Foreign Missions. The Sunday-schools grew to 250,000, and a Sunday-school Union was formed. In primary education the Methodists insisted on "elective popular control, and the permeation of the educative process by religion." In secondary work a number of schools were established; while more students were going to the universities since the abolition of Church tests in 1871. Training-schools were

Sunday-schools and Education

established for teachers and for local preachers, for missionaries, and especially for the regular ministry.

6. **Present condition of Wesleyan Methodism.** Wesleyan Methodism in England is now a strong, vigorous body of 2,400 ministers and 540,000 members. The form of government has gradually become more democratic, and its doctrinal position more closely defined. It accepts without controversy the doctrines which have resulted from the great struggles of the past as summed up in the Articles of Religion prepared by John Wesley; but it puts special stress on those doctrines that relate to and grow out of Christian experience. The great facts of sin in man and salvation in Jesus Christ are central.

Present Status

II. Divisions.

There was only one small branch that left the body because of doctrine, and it soon disappeared. The other divisions were because of differences in polity and practice.

1. **The Methodist New Connexion.** This was the result of dissatisfaction with the Plan of Pacification, especially the lack of ability on the part of preachers to administer the Sacraments and of the laity to participate in Church Councils. Alexander Kilham, the leader of the movement, was expelled from the Conference in 1796, and 5,000 members went with him. By 1907 they had grown to about 200 ministers and 40,000 members.

New Connexion

2. **Bible Christian Methodists.** C'Bryan, a preacher, refused to preach in one place if he thought another needed him more. For his irregularity he was expelled from the Conference in 1810, only to be readmitted and expelled again on the same charge in 1815. He was an evangelist and out of his labors the new body grew to about 200 ministers and 35,000 members.

Bible Christians

3. **United Methodist Free Church.** This was the result of a union of several small bodies in 1857. They were the Protestant Methodist Church, the Wesleyan Methodist Association, and the Wesleyan Reform

Free Church

Union, which had left the Methodist body as a result of continued agitation against the clerical party, and its purpose to conserve all ultimate authority in the ministry.

United Methodist Church

4. The United Methodist Church. Still later, in 1907, the three bodies mentioned above, the Methodist New Connexion, the Bible Christian Methodists, and the United Methodist Free Church, united to form the United Methodist Church. They have about 1,000 ministers and 200,000 members.

Primitive Methodist Church

5. The Primitive Methodist Church. Early in the last century there was a controversy over what we called "revivalism" and Church order and regulation. "Revivalism was a soil full of the germs of life." Out of it grew "Independent Methodists," "Quaker Methodists," and other small ephemeral bodies. But the chief result was the Primitive Methodist Church. Hugh Bourne was its "revivalist," and Lorenzo Dow, the eccentric from America, introduced camp meetings, which became a bone of contention because of objectionable features, though a blessing in extending the revival and winning converts. The Wesleyans forbade the camp meeting, and the followers of Bourne and Clowes organized the Primitive Methodist Church in 1810. At first its growth was slow, but its evangelistic spirit triumphed over opposition as well as inner disturbance, and to-day it is the second Methodist body in England with nearly 1,200 ministers and 210,000 members.

Lesson Outline:

I. Development of Methodism in England.
   1. The necessity for separation.
      a. Civil changes.
      b. Religious changes.
   2. Forming an organization.
      a. Men associated with Wesley.
      b. Ordinations.
      c. Wesley's "Deed."

3. After Wesley's death.
   a. Early leaders.
   b. Growth.
4. Dark days but new movements.
5. The forward movement.
6. The present condition of Wesleyan Methodism.

II. Divisions.

1. The Methodist New Connexion.
2. Bible Christian Methodists.
3. United Methodist Free Church.
4. The United Methodist Church.
5. The Primitive Methodist Church.

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Topics for Special Study:

1. The causes of separation of Churches.
2. Relation of life to form in Churches.

Topics for Class Discussion:

1. At first what was the relation of Methodism to the Church of England?
2. Indicate important civil changes in England that aided Methodism in its development.
3. Indicate some of the early developments within the Methodist Church.
4. What steps were taken to prevent disintegration in the event of Wesley's death?
5. Describe the situation following Wesley's death.
6. What has been accomplished through the Forward Movement?
7. What is the present status of Wesleyan Methodism?
8. Tell of the different offshoots from Wesleyan Methodism.

PART II

METHODISM IN AMERICA

CHAPTER V

THE BEGINNINGS OF METHODISM IN AMERICA

I. Immigration.

Methodism, developing later into the Methodist Episcopal Church, did not have its origin in America. There lies back of it the Wesleyan revival and the Methodism in England which we have already described. It came to America, as many other things have come, in the hearts of immigrants. It did not come officially, as an organization, but as an experience in the heart, and an impulse in the life.

Origin

The presence of the Wesleys in Georgia was before Methodism was born, and when they were still in the bonds of ascetic rules and ritualistic forms. Whitefield swept over America again and again as an eloquent evangelist, winning converts that he left to identify themselves with the Calvinistic Churches, giving new life to these organizations. No doubt his ministry did much to prepare the way of the missionaries who came after him. In 1770 he died. In Newburyport, as he was about to retire for the night, the people gathered about the house where he had stopped and besought him to speak to them. Exhausted though he was he could not refuse, and pausing on the stairs he exhorted them until the candle which he held in his hand burned away and went out in the socket. The next morning he was not, for God had taken him. "To him while time shall last must be given the credit of introducing the spirit of Methodism into the New World."

Wesley and Whitefield in America

In the latter part of the seventeenth century the troops of Louis XIV had devastated the Palatinate on the Rhine. The inhabitants were Protestant and thousands of them fled to England. A number of these families were settled in Limerick County, Ireland. Among their names are those of Embury and Heck. They had been without pastors for more than a generation. The Methodist itinerants visited their hamlets and soon they were a serious, religious, thinking people. In 1758 Wesley visited them. In 1760 a group of these Palatines, among whom were Philip Embury and Barbara Heck, set sail from Limerick for the New World. Embury had been converted in 1752, and had been a class leader and local preacher in Ireland. Other immigrants from Limerick, some of them Palatines, and a few of them Methodists, arrived in 1765. Barbara Heck, on a visit to this company, one of whom was her eldest brother, found some of them playing cards, doubtless to her the symbols of gambling. She seized the cards, threw them into the fire, and warned the players of their danger of being lost forever.

Palatines in England and America

Heck and Embury

II. First Beginnings.

1. **In New York.** From her adventure with the card players Mrs. Heck hurried to the house of Philip Embury on Barrack Street, now Park Place, and appealed to him to preach the Word forthwith. "Brother Embury, you must preach to us, or we shall all go to hell, and God will require our blood at your hands." It is probable that up to this time, since coming to the New World, Embury had lived a consistent, earnest life, but had neglected to exercise his gifts as he had previously done in Ireland. At first he demurred, but Barbara Heck met all his excuses, imploring him not to delay but to commence at once, in his own house and among his own people. Finally he consented and she gathered a congregation consisting of

Preaching

four persons besides herself. To these Philip Embury, the first preacher, first class leader, and first trustee in American Methodism, preached what was probably entitled to be called the first Methodist sermon in America. After preaching, he formed a class, which thereafter he met weekly. This first service was held in 1766. New York at this time was a small city, containing only a few thousand people, and the new movement aroused great interest. "The poorer part of the community furnished the majority of the converts." By 1767 Embury's house was too small for the congregation and the services were held in a rigging-loft, sixty by eighteen feet, which "could not contain half the people who desired to hear the Word of the Lord."

Classes

Barbara Heck was praying for a chapel. She received the answer, "I the Lord will do it," and a plan for the building was formed in her mind. A site was leased on John Street in 1768, and on October 30, 1768, Wesley Chapel, the first Methodist Church building in America, was dedicated. The site was purchased in 1770, and a parsonage erected. The chapel was soon full of interested hearers.

Church

Meanwhile, early in 1767, a stranger "in military dress and wearing a sword" had appeared in one of the meetings. The Methodists were at first disturbed by his presence, but all fears were allayed when he introduced himself as "Captain Thomas Webb, of the king's service, and also a soldier of the Cross and a spiritual son of John Wesley." His announcement, that he was authorized of Wesley to preach, brought joy to the company, and very soon he showed himself a most useful man. Services were held in the rigging loft three times a week; here he preached, alternating with Embury. The building of Wesley Chapel was made possible largely by his generosity and active labors in its behalf. He was of singular and striking appearance; he wore a green shade over one of his eyes, a badge of courage, for he had lost the member at the siege

The Labors of Webb

of Louisburg. He had scaled the Heights of Abraham with Wolfe, and been wounded at Quebec. Wesley said of him: "The Captain is all life and fire; therefore, although he is not deep or regular, yet many who would not hear a better preacher flock together to hear him." President John Adams described him as "the old soldier—one of the most eloquent men I have ever heard." His military appearance was combined with a benignant face, a fatherly heart, and a commanding voice. From New York he itinerated on Long Island, through New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Delaware. He planted Methodism in Jamaica, Long Island; Burlington, New Jersey, and in Philadelphia.

2. **In Philadelphia.** Webb became the founder of the Society when he first preached in a sail-loft and formed a class in 1767 or 1768. Here he helped to purchase the first Methodist church, St. George's, in 1770, and in 1771 he returned to England to plead for preachers for America.

3. **In Maryland.** In the County of Leitrim, Ireland, of Hibernian stock, was born Robert Strawbridge. As a local preacher he did good work in the Counties of Sligo, Cavan, and Armaugh. He and his wife immigrated to America about 1764 to 1770, and settled on Sam's Creek in the backwoods of Frederick County, Maryland. He opened his house for preaching and formed in it a Methodist Society, and then built the "Log Meeting-House" on Sam's Creek. This, probably the second Methodist Church building in America, a log chapel, twenty-two feet square, without floor, door, or windows, soon became the center from which Strawbridge itinerated through Eastern Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. He founded Methodism in Baltimore. Sinners were converted under the fluent preaching of the hearty Irishman, and preachers were from the first raised up to carry on the work. One of his converts was Richard Owen, the first native Methodist preacher (unless it be Edward Evans). By the practically

Strawbridge and Sam's Creek

Richard Owen

unrewarded labors of this consecrated hero a band of preachers quite a number of appointments were ready for the [illegible]nts when they came with their more methodical methods of work.

Methodism was not only brought to America in the hearts of early immigrants, but immigrant preachers continued to come and lead on the movement, and often emigrants carried it to new communities in the North, and especially the West.

III. Immigrant Preachers.

1. Williams and King. Meantime letters had been sent to John Wesley requesting him to send preachers from England, telling him of the work already done and of its promise for the future. Robert Williams was the first to respond, and Wakeley says he was "the first Methodist minister in America that published a book, the first that married, the first that located, and the first that died." He received Wesley's permission to come, and hearing that his friend Ashton was about to sail he hurried to port, sold his horse to pay his debts, and with saddlebags, a loaf of bread, and a bottle of milk, but no money for his passage, went on board. Ashton paid his expenses across the sea. He became a plain, artless, indefatigable preacher in New York, Maryland, and Virginia. "He was the apostle of Methodism in Virginia and North Carolina." He won many converts, among them Jesse Lee, the apostle of New England. John King, who had come as an immigrant, was licensed after he had preached a trial sermon in Philadelphia in 1769, was received into the ministry, and was a member of the first Conference in 1773. He was a pious, useful, zealous man with stentorian voice, who "made the dust fly from the old velvet cushion" in St. Paul's, Baltimore. He was a great revivalist.

Robert Williams

John King

2. Boardman and Pilmoor. At the Conference of 1769, Wesley, in answer to requests, called for volunteers to go to

America, and Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor answered. Twenty pounds was raised for their passage, and after a tempestuous voyage, lasting from August to October, they reached Philadelphia, where they found Captain Webb and a hundred Methodists. They took charge of the work in Philadelphia and New York, exchanging places every three months, and meanwhile made preaching tours in the surrounding country. After four years of faithful work, chiefly in New York and Philadelphia, and attending the first Conference in 1773, Boardman and Pilmoor returned to England and did good work there in the itinerant ranks. Boardman died in Cork, Ireland, in 1782; Pilmoor later returned to America, entered the Protestant Episcopal Church, and after serving as a rector in Philadelphia and New York, died in a good old age, greatly venerated.

Boardman and Pilmoor

3. **Rankin and Shadford.** Appeals for ministers continued to be sent to Wesley, and at the Conference of 1772, in Leeds, they were backed by the personal presence of Captain Webb. Thomas Rankin and George Shadford were sent. The latter was an interesting character, who rendered faithful service in New York, Philadelphia, Delaware, Baltimore, and Virginia until the Revolution broke out, when he returned to England, where he died in 1816.

Rankin and Shadford

Rankin was appointed superintendent and showed himself a rigid disciplinarian in days when that quality was needed. But he never understood conditions in the new country, "manifested an opposition to revivals on account of 'the extravagant manifestations,'" and spoke so imprudently on public affairs that it was thought wise for him to return to England in 1778. He had done a great work in preparing Methodism for its organization into the Methodist Episcopal Church. He was present at the death of John Wesley. He died in 1810.

It is well to note that at the first Conference in 1778 all

those present were Europeans, and that to these immigrants Methodism owed much of its growth in numbers, and especially the effective organization which they had learned from John Wesley, and which saved Methodism from blending with other Protestant bodies as the results of Whitefield's labors had done, or of being scattered in the unsettled conditions of the Colonies. There were in 1778, 1,160 members of classes, besides many more adherents.

IV. Later Leaders.

1. **Bishop Asbury.** Francis Asbury was appointed to America in 1770. He was destined to become to American Methodism what Wesley was to English Methodism. He was converted in his father's barn in England and was soon preaching three, four, and five times a week. Between twenty-one and twenty-two years of age he gave up his occupation and gave himself fully to God and His work. He was about twenty-five when appointed to America by Wesley. In 1772, at the age of twenty-seven, Wesley appointed him his "assistant," or superintendent of the American societies. By 1784 he had spent thirteen years of almost incredible industry and incessant preaching, a part of the time as superintendent; and nearly all the time the real leader of the early revivalists. At forty years of age he had become the Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Stevens says, "He was studious, somewhat introspective, with a thoughtfulness which was tinged at times with melancholy. He was one of those minds which can find rest only in work, and therefore endowed with a restless instinct for it. He was an incessant preacher, of singular practical directness; was ever in motion, on foot or horseback over his long circuits; a rigorous disciplinarian, disposed to do everything by method; a man of few words, and those always to the point; of quick and marvelous insight into character. He never lost his self-possession; seemed not to know fear; could plan saga-

Early Life

Character

ciously," and was a leader of marvelous endurance and unceasing inspiration. He early became the recognized leader of Methodism in the New World, growing in the esteem, love, and reverence of everybody. Like the angel of the everlasting gospel, he was flying abroad to Mt. Vernon, to Charlestown, and the Carolinas; over the mountains to Tennessee, through Western Pennsylvania and New Jersey, to Philadelphia, New York, and up the Hudson; back again, to and fro, north and south, east and west, from Ohio to Kentucky, to New England, from Lake Champlain to Georgia. Wherever the battle was thickest, a revival to be inspired, a church to be dedicated, a Conference to be held, a college to be founded, a sermon to be preached, a soul to be saved, or a Sunday-school to be organized, he was sure to appear: the very herald of victory. His path was not always smooth,

Everywhere

roads were bad or did not exist; homes were humble and fare the simplest; friends of slavery in the South threatened to mob; Calvinists in New England opposed, so that while he preached "some smiled, some laughed, some swore, some talked, some prayed, some wept;" Indians in the West went on the warpath; but this heroic soul shrank neither from perils nor privations, so that souls might be saved, the Church might grow, and the Lord Jesus Christ as the Savior and Lord of all be preached everywhere.

2. Richard Whatcoat. Among the secondary leaders, though hardly secondary in importance, was Richard Whatcoat, a saintly man, and a great leader in the great central fields of the new Church. He was amiable, courteous, heavenly; a man of fortitude, and yet of great prudence and ten-

Whatcoat

derness. He was born in England in 1736, and converted there when in his twenty-sixth year. He had preached in England, Ireland, and Wales with great success before Wesley selected him to be ordained and go with Vasey and Coke to organize the Church in America. After the Christmas Conference in 1784 he took the field in

Maryland, then passed to Philadelphia and vicinity, and the next year penetrated to Allegheny. In 1788 his circuit extended from Maryland peninsula to Ohio. In 1789 he traveled with Asbury to New York, went by horseback to Pittsburg, east and south to Charlestown, west to Georgia, up to Tennessee and Kentucky, and back to Pennsylvania and New York, whence, after a few months, he was appointed to Baltimore, and there welcomed the first regular General Conference in 1792. Everywhere he administered the sacrament with great impressiveness, and often preached with overwhelming unction. In all these regions the itinerants were keeping the revival fires burning. Thomas Ware, Benjamin Abbott, Reuben Ellis, John Dickens, and many more deserve all honor for revival victories won in these great fields.

Central Regions

3. Freeborn Garrettson. Freeborn Garrettson, converted about 1773 on horseback, after severe struggles and freeing his slaves, began preaching in 1775, and joined the Conference in 1776. He was threatened by armed men, one of his friends shot for entertaining him, and persecutions were continuous, but through all the years of the Revolution he kept on preaching in North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, and Delaware among "melted congregations," "powerful awakenings," "conquered opposers," "prolonged meetings," and "blessed revivals." He was the herald sent off like an arrow to call the preachers to the Christmas Conference. He was ordained at the Conference and sent off to Nova Scotia, where Methodism was already begun under William Black. Here Garrettson wrought heroically, enduring hardships, escaping dangers, and leaving seven hundred members when he returned in the spring of 1787. Wesley wanted him set apart as superintendent or bishop of all the British possessions in America. It was not done probably because his brethren did not want him separated from them. After a year in Maryland, he was commissioned to extend Methodism up the Hudson. In 1788 he led a band of

Heroic Labors

young itinerants northward from New York. War had raged through this whole region from New York to the St. Lawrence. The settlements were new, the roads were bad, the accommodations worse, and drunkenness, profanity, and speculative infidelity were general. But in spite of privations and opposition there were revivals, societies were organized, and circuits formed all the way to Lake Champlain, as far west as Utica, and into the beautiful Wyoming Valley. Garrettson would go around the district every three months, traveling a thousand miles and preaching a hundred times. And so Methodism was planted in all those regions.

4. Jesse Lee. Jesse Lee, a native of Virginia, was long a "champion among the itinerants." He was converted in 1773, and witnessed the remarkable effects of George Shadford's ministry. He was drafted into the army of the Revolution in 1780, but would not bear arms, and became a kind of chaplain, preaching wherever he could obtain opportunity. Asbury enlisted him in 1782, and he became "one of the most versatile orators, alike at home in pathos, humor, and wit." After seven years of successful preaching in the Southern and Central States, in 1789 he was at a Conference in New York. At its close he was able to carry out a purpose of years to carry Methodism into New England. He passed through Norwalk and New Haven, preaching as he went, and on a serene afternoon in July, 1890, took his stand on a table under the Elm (since fallen) in Boston Common, and sang and prayed and preached.

The Labors of Lee

New England was not an easy field to conquer. There was already a well-organized Church that had been recognized by law. Membership had been necessary to citizenship. But the Church had become formal and without religious experience, though entrenched in its own orthodoxy and morality. Others of like faith with Lee had preached here and there in New England, but he had come to establish Methodism. He preached on the highways, in barns, in private houses, sometimes in churches

New England

or public buildings. At the end of three months of "incessant labors and vexatious rebuffs," three women were organized into the new Church which was to "spread Scriptural holiness over the land." Solitariness in a strange land amid universal indifference and frigid politeness would have killed a man of less cheerful temperament, aye, of less triumphant faith. But in time all of New England "was rife with rumors of a strange man who had come from the South, and was traveling through the villages on horseback, and in a costume of Quaker-like simplicity, preaching every day and sometimes several times a day, exceedingly good humored, nay, even witty, of a most musical voice, making his hearers smile or weep as he pleased, scattering the village wits by his irresistible repartees, leading drunkards and reprobates to be good men." And so the frost of cold frigidity and the ice of rigid indifference began to thaw. Societies were organized, circuits were formed, chapels built, assistants gathered, while Lee, "the apostle of New England," ever pushed into further new fields. Over Maine and Vermont, as well as Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts, he ranged, singing, praying, preaching, and organizing new churches and circuits. The first Annual Conference in New England was held in 1792. There were reported one thousand three hundred and eighty-five members, and eighteen preachers received appointments at the close of the Conference session. We can not stop to speak in detail of other toilers in early New England Methodism whose lives are as interesting as romances—Aaron Sanford, Hope Hull, Enoch Mudge, George Pickering, and many others.

5. Francis Poythress. Francis Poythress, dissipated in youth, and disappearing at last in a cloud of insanity, was an apostle of the then Southwest. Converted under Jarratt of Virginia, he was a revivalist when the Methodists came along, and he joined them in 1775. He led Methodism in 1783 across the Alleghanies and served it there with pre-eminent success. Braddock's Road over the mountains had opened the way, and immi-

Work in the Southwest

gration followed. Local preachers, like Thomas Lakin, John J. Jacob, a lieutenant in the Revolutionary War and hero of the Brandywine, Simon Cochrane, a soldier all through the Revolutionary War, and Robert Wooster, were settling in and beyond the mountains, and spreading Methodism everywhere. There were many faithful itinerants like Isaac Smith, the St. John of the Southwest; Wilson Lee, who hazarded his life in Kentucky and Tennessee, and William Burke, who tells how they suffered many privations, endured many toils and dangers preached in woods, forts, and cabins; slept on straw and on bear, buffalo, and deer skins; fed on bear meat, venison, wild turkey, and hominy; but saw some revivals and had love feasts; and became such a band of brothers that they embraced and wept when they had to part. Daniel Boone was then pioneering in Kentucky, and ambuscades and massacres were frequent.

Tennessee and Kentucky

Francis Poythress was prominent in these Western regions at this period, and to no one does this part of the Church owe a greater debt of gratitude. Asbury had nominated him for the episcopacy. He had a great sense of responsibility for the work committed to him, and a high sense of moral obligation. While pushing on the extending work, and shouting on the revival hosts, enduring hardships and privations, preaching, visiting, organizing, and enforcing discipline, he became impressed with the conviction that education was necessary to the best interests of the Church, and he founded Bethel Academy in Kentucky. A large brick structure of two stories was erected, and considerable debt incurred that weighed on the sensitive mind of Poythress, till it broke and sank into "a state of insanity" from which death alone relieved him. But his greatness and goodness, his leadership and loyalty, remain unclouded; and the triumphs of Methodism in all those regions of the West are his victories.

V. Early Growth.

The growth of Methodism during this early period was remarkable. It had extended from Nova Scotia to Georgia, and from Maine to the farthest settlements of Kentucky and Tennessee. It had multiplied to sixty-five thousand nine hundred and eighty members and two hundred and fifty preachers. It was building churches, accumulating means, raising up and training ministers, and getting ready for even greater revivals and victories and extensions in the years to come.

Results

Lesson Outline:

I. Immigration.
  1. In New York.
  2. In Philadelphia.
  3. In Maryland.

III. Immigrant Preachers.
  1. Williams and King.
  2. Boardman and Pilmoor.
  3. Rankin and Shadford.

IV. Later Leaders.
  1. Francis Asbury.
  2. Richard Whatcoat.
  3. Freeborn Garrettson.
  4. Jesse Lee.
  5. Francis Poythress.

V. Early Growth.

Bibliography:

Stevens, "History of the Methodist Episcopal Church."
Asbury's Journal.
Buckley, "History of Methodism."

Topics for Special Study:

1. Relation of immigration to the spread of Methodism.
2. Religious conditions in America when Methodism came.
3. Influence of Methodists in the Colonies.

Topics for Class Discussion:

1. Tell of the preparation for the beginning of American Methodism.
2. Who was Barbara Heck and what was her work?
3. Describe the work of Philip Embury. Of Captain Webb.
4. Name the preachers sent out by Wesley and tell of their ministry.
5. Why was Wesley's authority over Methodism in America acknowledged by the early Methodists?
6. Tell of the character and work of Asbury.
7. Describe the career of Jesse Lee.
8. Characterize the ministry of Whatcoat; of Garrettson; of Poythress.

CHAPTER VI

THE FOUNDING OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

I. Organization Needed.

1. Preliminary Work. We have seen that the beginnings in New York and Maryland were entirely independent of each other. For some time the only unity between them was in their oneness of experience and life. The itinerating of Captain Webb and Robert Williams had helped this spirit of unity, but not until Wesley sent Boardman and Pilmoor in 1769 were there any attempts at formal organization, save of "Classes" and "Societies," and more or less indefinite "Circuits." While Boardman and Pilmoor spent most of their time in New York and Philadelphia, they itinerated from Boston to Savannah, and as representatives of Wesley gave to the rapidly spreading work a sense of kinship.

Lack of Organization

Francis Asbury was destined to be Methodism's great leader and organizer in this formative period. He was not only an incessant preacher, but a vigorous disciplinarian as well, disposed to do everything by method. His military mind grasped the necessity of a somewhat regular "circulation of the preachers." He was determined to have an itinerancy or die in the attempt. A disposition to localize pastors was growing up, but Asbury set himself against it with invincible energy. In the autumn of 1772 he received his appointment as "Assistant" of Wesley, or Superintendent of the American Societies. He was now a connecting link between the Soci-

Asbury's Work

Itinerancy

eties, and "set about to regulate them by settling the Classes and giving to Methodism form and consistency." "He wanted order and certainty, and knew nothing could secure these but Methodist rule." A Quarterly Conference on a circuit appears in Christmas week, 1772. Local preachers and exhorters began to be licensed. But difficulties arose under Asbury's administration. Older men could not yield to his military command that would have made them cavalry scouts scouring the country, or better, Christian apostles sent everywhere preaching Christ and Him crucified.

2. More definite steps. Thomas Rankin was appointed "Assistant" and was warmly welcomed by Asbury in June, 1772. Soon the scattered itinerants were called together for the first American Methodist Conference on the 14th to the 16th of July, 1773, in Philadelphia. There were ten present. They agreed to be subject to the authority of John Wesley, and the doctrine and discipline of the Methodists, and not to administer the sacraments, exhorting the members of the Societies to receive the ordinances at Church (by which they meant the Church of England, still established by law in some of the Colonies). Mr. Wesley's books were not to be reprinted without his authority and the consent of the brethren. Here is already a hint of the "Methodist Book Concern."

First Conference

This seems a small beginning of churchly form, but ten itinerants were appointed to circuits that included all the Societies, and so a more definite unity was secured.

The Second Conference was held in Philadelphia, May 25 to 27, 1774. Rankin's disciplinary vigor had produced salutary effects in regulating and consolidating the new body and making it more efficient. There were now ten circuits, seventeen preachers, and two thousand and seventy-three members. Watters, the first native itinerant, was present at this Conference, and Gatch, another native, was received—the forerunners of a multitude that was soon to rise up from among the increas-

Second Conference

ing population of the Colonies, and especially of the new nation soon to be born. A few economical arrangements are all that can be traced to this Conference, only that "the itinerancy was under a stern regimen," as all preachers were to "change at the end of six months." This kept them energetic by keeping them in motion.

3. Conditions during the Revolution. It is well known that with the breaking out of the Revolution the Church of England clergy returned to England. All the English itinerants in the ranks of Methodism returned also, save Asbury. Wesley's "Calm Address" to the Colonies made the position of even Mr. Asbury uncomfortable. He was for a time in peril. The third Conference was held in Philadelphia in 1775. But we need not try to follow the order of the Conferences. Asbury was compelled to "retire" from general travel over the whole country, and for two years limited his work chiefly to the State of Delaware, where conditions were more favorable, and he was cared for by the Whites, Barretts, and others. The prejudice against the Methodists was strong because they were thought to agree with Wesley and to be under his control. The preachers were often persecuted, abused, and imprisoned. But Asbury never meddled with politics, and the public became assured of his loyalty to the American cause. Watters, Gatch, Abbott, Garrettson, Ruff, and other native itinerants kept the revival fires burning. In spite of the fact that some Societies were broken up during the war, others decreased in numbers, and the erection of chapels was retarded if not arrested, the number of Methodists increased, so that nearly fourteen thousand were reported in 1783.

English Clergy Return

Revivals

Asbury was able to leave his retirement in 1781, and began those incredible tours over the continent, raising up and inspiring preachers, leading revivals, forming new Societies and circuits, averting schisms, and drawing all into a closer unity by his organizing genius, great personality, and mighty labors.

II. Organization at the Christmas Conference.

1. The coming of Coke. In November, 1784, Asbury, worn and weary from travel and preaching, reached Barrett's Chapel during public worship, and found "a man of small stature, ruddy complexion, brilliant eyes, long hair, musical voice, and gowned as an English clergyman," officiating. He ascended the pulpit, embraced and kissed him, for it was the Rev. Thomas Coke, LL. D., of imperial soul, already a chieftain of Methodism, and ordained the first Protestant bishop for the New World. He had been sent by Wesley to organize Methodism in America. Soon Garrettson was flying over the country summoning the itinerants to a Conference in Lovely Lane Chapel, Baltimore, on December 24, 1784.

Asbury meets Coke

2. The first General Conference. This was the first General Conference, famous in American Methodism as the "Christmas Conference." About sixty itinerants were present. Coke presided. A letter was read from John Wesley that "as our brethren are now totally disentangled both from the State and from the English hierarchy, we dare not entangle them again. They are now at full liberty to follow the Scriptures and the primitive Church." In order to pave the way for them, Wesley had appointed Coke and Asbury as joint superintendents; and convinced that the bishops and presbyters were of the same order in the Church, and hence of his right as a presbyter in the Church of England to ordain, (all efforts to secure ordination by the Bishop of London having failed), on September 2, 1784, he had ordained Vasey and Whatcoat deacons, assisted by two elders and on this same day set apart Thomas Coke as superintendent or bishop of the Methodist Societies in America. Vasey and Whatcoat had come to America with Coke, to assist in administering the sacraments.

First General Conference

Wesley's Ordinations

3. The Methodist Episcopal Church Organized. "It

was agreed," says Asbury, "to form ourselves into an Episcopal Church and to have superintendents, elders, and deacons." Asbury declined to be set apart as superintendent unless elected by his brethren. Coke and he were unanimously elected, and on the second day Asbury was ordained deacon by Coke, assisted by Vasey and Whatcoat. On the next day, Sunday, he was ordained elder, and on Monday "he was consecrated superintendent," Otterbein assisting Coke and his elders. The next three days were spent in enacting rules of discipline and the election of preachers to orders. Several deacons were ordained on Friday. Saturday the project of Abingdon College was considered, and on Sunday, January 2, 1785, twelve elders and one deacon were ordained and the Conference ended in great unanimity.

Conference Ordinations

In the American Minutes, published a few months later, the phrase, "the elected superintendent, or bishop," was used, and it is well to remember that Thomas Coke was the first Protestant bishop set apart for America, and Francis Asbury the first Protestant bishop consecrated in America.

Wesley had sent over by Coke "The Sunday Service of the Methodists in North America," and it was adopted by the Christmas Conference, making the Methodist Episcopal Church one "in which the Liturgy should be read." This action has never been formally repealed and is doubtless law to-day; but it was not adapted to the conditions in early Methodism, and soon became obsolete. Gowns and bands used by some at first also soon disappeared.

Ritual

Up to the Christmas Conference Methodism as a Church movement had been struggling, advancing, retreating, with an appearance of vagueness or uncertainty. But from now on as the Methodist Episcopal Church, with a definite order of ministry, a well-built polity, and a preachable doctrine it entered upon a career of marvelous growth.

III. Doctrines and Polity.

1. The Articles of Religion. The Articles of Religion, as abridged and amended from the Forty-nine Articles of the Church of England by Wesley to twenty-four, were adopted, with the addition of the twenty-fifth on the United States. The Conference enacted comprehensive measures for the "extirpation" of slavery, defined the allowance for preachers and their families, established a "Preacher's Fund" to help the superannuates and widows of preachers, which was later merged in the "Chartered Fund," and adopted a "singularly minute moral discipline as prescribed in its 'general rules' and ministerial regimen."

2. The Polity. This early organic form of the Methodist Episcopal Church was not complete. Many changes have since been made, chiefly in the way of developing the early implications. Still, "its system was remarkably precise and consecutive," and proved very effective. Its prayer meetings, band meetings, class meetings, almost daily preaching, and frequent revival meetings, kept it in a glow of fervor. Its class leaders, exhorters, local preachers, circuit preachers, district preachers, and superintendents discharged the pastoral functions and provided for rapid extension. Its Quarterly Conference for the circuit, Annual Conferences, and General Conferences for the whole Nation, growing more and more distinct in functions, governed its eighty preachers and nearly fifteen thousand members. The Church now increased with leaps and bounds.

Organization

3. Vital faith and preaching. Its faith was definite enough for cohesion, and liberal enough for personal independence. The Articles of Religion were chiefly a summing up of the doctrinal battles of Church history—the practical creed of Methodism that was preached and really held essential was of another character.

Methodism was first of all a life, and its real doctrines were those unfolded by experience in the Christian life. It is

well to remember that Methodism was not a revolt against either the doctrines or polity of the English Church. It was a new life, fruitful in new Christian experiences and new Christian activities. Its real, vital doctrines were those of experience; the conviction of sin by the Holy Spirit; the ability of man to turn from sin to God; the pardon and peace found in Jesus Christ; the birth that comes from above and makes man a new creature in Jesus Christ; the witness to the soul of its adoption into the family of God whereby it cries "Abba, Father;" the new sense of purity within that fruits in a consciousness of the Divine, and a holy life and character that begets a hope big with immortality and eternal life.

Vital Doctrines

They found these experiences justified by the Word of God, and that they confirmed to them the Word, both its divineness and its authority. So they went out with the experience in their hearts and the Word in their hands, to preach the central, saving truths of the gospel with an evangelistic fervor that made them a conquering host in the name of their Lord Jesus Christ, and by the power of the Holy Spirit.

It was certainly providential that just when the new Nation had achieved freedom and was taking form; just when it had come to consciousness and its population was beginning to rush beyond the Alleghanies and take possession of the great West, this new Church should come into existence with doctrines, polity, and leaders so admirably adapted to the times. When the air was full of the spirit of liberty it preached the freedom of all men to choose in matters religious. When the tides of population were sweeping westward, and new settlements were springing up daily, this new Church with its itinerant ministry followed every new movement, and settled in new settlements with its class leaders and local preachers. Over the land left religiously deserted by the Revolution, and the return of the English clergy and

Methodism's Adaptation to the New Nation

the English Methodist itinerants, it swept in great revival power, that re-established religion and restored ethical standards. It was a chief influence in saving young America from infidelity and a return to savagery.

IV. The Work of Coke.

Bishop Coke did not remain in America permanently. He frequently crossed the Atlantic; helped the Wesleyans in England; presided over the Conferences in Ireland; established Methodism in the West Indies, and died on his way to found missions in India. But Coke was of great value to the Methodist Episcopal Church, as well as to general Methodism. He was a lawyer, and his legal abilities were manifest in Wesley's "Deed of Settlement" in England, and doubtless in the early form used for deeds of Church property in this country. He helped to shape the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and was with Asbury again and again at crucial points in the early administration. He traveled to and fro, preaching, organizing, and administering the sacraments, and presided in some of the Conferences. He was especially vigorous in his preaching against slavery, often arousing bitter opposition; and with Asbury called on George Washington at Mt. Vernon to get his signature to a petition to the Assembly in Virginia against slavery. They were cordially received and entertained, and assured by Washington that his sentiments agreed with the petition. Coke was especially anxious for the founding of a college at Abington, which was afterward, by a combination of names, called "Cokesbury."

Services to Methodism

Call on Washington

V. Development of Following Years.

1. Character of the early Conferences. Evolution involves progress from the simple to the complex. The organization of Methodism at the Christmas Conference was quite simple. It was definite enough for a new effectiveness, but

needs of a more thorough and complex organization were soon manifest. The Christmas Conference may be called a General Conference, though hardly such in the present-day sense of the term. It was not a delegated body. It was theoretically the whole ministry in session. Not all were there, however. No provision was made for future sessions. It adjourned *sine die*.

(a) The Annual Conference. The Annual Conferences were at first regarded as meetings of the undivided ministry. Somewhat informally there came to be two, and gradually more, of these annual gatherings as convenience required. The Annual Conference was still the supreme assembly of the Church even after the Christmas Conference. Legislation was by the enactment of the Annual Conferences. Bishop Asbury proposed the name of Poythress for Bishop to the New England Conference at Wilbraham. The Conference decided that it was not its function to elect a Bishop. Theoretically, however, the power did belong to all the Annual Conferences. These annual gatherings were great occasions. Preachers were admitted, their characters and work passed upon, they were elected to orders and ordained, and received their appointments from the bishop, who had no "cabinet," for as yet there were no presiding elders. At these early sessions there was much prayer, great preaching, and blessed revivals. They were times of great inspiration. But it was recognized that the powers of the Annual Conference were limited, and that a central body that represented the entire ministry should be in existence. The Church had now become so widely extended that it did not seem wise for all the ministers to leave their work and travel on horseback to a central meeting place and be away at least a month to hold a Conference. It was thought something else might take its place.

Legislation by the Annual Conference

(b) "The Council." In the year 1789 Bishops Coke and Asbury proposed to the Annual Conferences the plan of a "Council," to be composed of chosen men out of the several

districts, as representative of the whole connection. The "Council" was actually to be composed of the bishops and presiding elders (the first mention of this title, though the office had been growing in definiteness), not less than nine in all, and to have authority to mature things, *i. e.,* to formulate changes in the statement of doctrine, or changes in the polity, which were then to be presented to the Annual Conferences and to go into effect when and where adopted by the Annual Conferences. The "Council" held two sessions, in 1789 and 1790, and appointed a third for 1792. But objections to it arose, which amounted to perilous contention, and the third session was not held. It was concluded to have a General Conference.

Nature of "The Council"

Meantime some things had been done by the Annual Conferences that were considered as the action of the whole Church. At the New York Conference, in 1789, it was thought wise to recognize the new constitutional government and George Washington, the recently inaugurated first President. By action of the Conference, on May 29th, Bishops Coke and Asbury called on President Washington, and Asbury read an impressive address, to which Washington replied felicitously. The Methodist Episcopal Church was the first to take such action, and others followed in a few days.

2. Important action of successive General Conferences.

(a) The Second General Conference. Other matters were pressing for solution, and a second General Conference (counting the Christmas Conference, 1784, as the first), was called to meet at Baltimore, November 1, 1792. Bishop Coke had just returned from England. All members of the Annual Conferences were members of the General Conference, and many of the preachers had gathered from all parts of the Church. There seems to be no official record of the proceedings in existence, but Jesse Lee, who was present and active, has left us an outline of its most important doings. The "Council," to which Lee had

Changes in the Law

been opposed, was "tacitly abolished." Regular General Conferences were ordained. The Annual Conferences were more definitely distinguished from the General Conference, their limits to be defined by the bishops, who also appointed the times of their sessions. Provision was made for the election, ordination, and trial of the bishops. The office of presiding elder took definite form, and the title appeared and came into general use in 1797. The presiding elders were to be appointed by the bishops, though not allowed more than four years in succession in one district. Their duties were described. They really became sub-diocesan superintendents. Other minor regulations were also adopted.

(b) The Third General Conference. The third General Conference, that of 1796, met in Baltimore also. From one hundred to one hundred and twenty preachers were present. The whole Church was now definitely divided into six Annual Conferences by the General Conference, and the membership fixed; a form of deed for Church property was adopted, and action was taken about the Book Concern and the publication of "The Methodist Magazine." The "Chartered Fund" was established; action taken about "retailing or giving spiritous liquors" and slavery; and much attention was given to education.

Changes in 1796

If the old century in which the Methodist Episcopal Church was born showed a decrease in its last Conference, the new century of 1800 came in with revivals breaking out everywhere. The excitement at times seemed unwarrantable, especially in the great camp-meetings of the West, but the good effects on the life of the Church and the morals of the Nation can not be gainsaid.

Revivals Closing the Century

(c) The Fourth General Conference. This Conference met in Baltimore on May 6, 1800, and was still composed of all the "traveling elders," though but one hundred and fifteen were present. Bishop Asbury was worn and failing in health, and wanted to resign. The Wesleyans in England and Ireland

asked that Bishop Coke be allowed to return to them. This request was granted if Coke would return to the next Conference, but Asbury was unanimously asked to continue his inestimable services, and after several ballots, in one of which the vote was a tie between Whatcoat and Lee, Whatcoat was elected the third bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The allowance of the preachers was slightly increased. The Church was divided into seven Annual Conferences. It was ordered that the bishop should not allow any preacher to remain in the same station more than two years successively. The right of trial by their peers was given to the members of the Church, and their right of appeal to the Quarterly Conference. Some things were not done that are suggestive of future agitations and enactments. A motion to make the presiding eldership elective failed, as did also a motion to make local preachers eligible to elder's orders. A motion to reorganize the General Conference as a delegated body was lost, as were also efforts to give the Conference a chance to choose three or four elders to aid the bishop in fixing the appointments. A number of motions concerning slavery were considered, all being against it, and one made by Stephen Timmons was adopted, "That if any of our traveling preachers marry persons holding slaves, and thereby become slaveholders, they shall be excluded from our societies unless they execute a legal emancipation of their slaves agreeably to the laws of the state wherein they reside."

Bishop Whatcoat

Lost Motions

This was a revival Conference. The revival that was sweeping over the country centered in Baltimore. The churches could not contain the crowds of people. Methodists marched in the streets of the city singing and shouting, and Whatcoat wrote that "not less than two hundred were converted during the sitting of the Conference."

(d) The Fifth General Conference. Again the Conference met in Baltimore, on May 7, 1804. The Church had grown to 115,411 members and four hundred traveling preachers, and

the local preachers, many of whom had been for a time in the Conference, were more numerous and were frequently the founders of Churches and even of circuits in new settlements.

Statistics

In this Conference the Discipline was thoroughly revised. The bishops were required to allow an Annual Conference to contine its session one week at least; they were not allowed to appoint a preacher for more than two consecutive years to the same appointment. The "Book Concern" was ordered removed to New York. The Constitution of the United States was recognized, and the "Nation declared independent and sovereign." Slavery was discussed as usual. The spirit against it seemed to have a more subdued tone, but any preacher who became an owner of slaves was to be expelled unless he emancipated, and members must neither buy nor sell slaves. Lee regretted that there was no revival during the session of this Conference.

Time Limit

(e) The Sixth General Conference. It met in Baltimore, May 6, 1808. The spread and development of the Church in the North, West, and Southwest made necessary a change in the character of the Conference. In the conditions of travel only a few of the preachers could come from the far-off Annual Conferences, and the Philadelphia and Baltimore Conferences had sixty-three members out of one hundred and twenty-nine. After a vigorous debate on the elective presiding eldership, that was lost by fifty-two to seventy-three; and a serious struggle that almost threatened a schism in the Church, "a form of law, a species of constitution," was adopted which provided for a General Conference composed of delegates elected by the Annual Conferences. It provided also that the General Conference should have "full powers" to make "rules and regulations" for the Church under certain restrictions, which with some modifications may be found in the Discipline and are known as the "restrictive rules." There were also other enactments per-

Constitution

taining to administrative details, and concerning slavery—the ghost that would not down.

Bishop Whatcoat had died on July 5, 1806. Bishop Coke had left the United States finally in 1804. So the worn and weary Asbury was left alone in the episcopacy. After motions to elect seven, two, and one, it was decided to elect one bishop, and because of his fitness for the office, his recognized leadership west of the Alleghanies, and a marvelous sermon he preached at the General Conference, William McKendree was elected. With the spread of the Church into wider regions, and its rapid development in numbers and resources, there had gradually come a more definite and complex organization, covering more and more definitely all administrative details. A new epoch in Church government may be said to have begun when the first delegated Conference met in New York in 1812.

Bishop McKendree

Lesson Outline:

I. Organization Needed.
   1. Preliminary work.
   2. More definite steps.
   3. Conditions during the Revolution.

II. Organization at the Christmas Conference.
   1. The coming of Coke.
   2. The first General Conference.
   3. The Methodist Episcopal Church organized.

III. Doctrines and Polity.
   1. The Articles of Religion.
   2. The polity.
   3. Vital faith and preaching.

IV. The Work of Coke.

V. Development of Following Years.
   1. Character of the early Conferences.
      a. The Annual Conference.
      b. The Council.

2. Important action of successive General Conferences.
   a. The second General Conference.
   b. The third General Conference.
   c. The fourth General Conference.
   d. The fifth General Conference.
   e. The sixth General Conference.

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Topics for Special Study:

1. The effects of the Revolutionary War on religion.
2. The evolution of the Constitution.

Topics for Class Discussion:

1. Tell of the early steps toward organization in American Methodism.
2. What was the significance of the "sacramental question?"
3. What was the influence of the Revolution on the Methodist movement?
4. What was the position of Thomas Coke?
5. What was the occasion for the "Christmas Conference?"
6. What was accomplished by it?
7. Characterize the inner spirit of Methodism.
8. What at first was the status of the Annual Conference?
9. What was done by the second General Conference?
10. Name the most important acts of the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth General Conferences.

CHAPTER VII

WINNING THE WEST
(1800-1844)

I. External Movements

1. Population. The most striking fact in the first half of the century is the moving of the population westward. Between 1800 and 1820, Kentucky, Tennessee, Ohio, Louisiana, Indiana, Mississippi, Illinois, and Alabama were admitted into the Union as States. From 1820 to 1846 the States of Missouri, Arkansas, Michigan, Texas, and Iowa were admitted. The center of population passed west of the Alleghanies. A great inland empire was carved out of the forests and prairies. The purchase of Louisiana in 1803, of Florida in 1819, and the later fixing of the Oregon boundary in the Northwest, and cessions from Mexico, trebled the territory of the United States and led to vast movements of people into the newer regions.

Westward; Ho!

2. Inventions. Inventions greatly facilitated agriculture and the marketing of its products. The invention of the cotton-gin in 1793 was of untold value to the South, while the opening of the first railway in 1839 made possible the inland commerce of the West. It was in 1819 that steamers began to cross the ocean, and immigration had an easier path across the seas. In 1844 the first electric telegraph was put into operation. It was a time of great internal improvement. Schools, churches, public buildings, canals and roads, and better homes were indications that great changes were taking place in the population. The frontier was pushed farther west, Indian hostilities and foreign irritations decreased, and peace gave the Churches

Improvements

chance for great growth. Revivals of extensive and sweeping power from 1826 to 1832 were followed, however, by a series of internal agitations that affected somewhat the spirit of the Church.

3. Reforms.

(a) Temperance. In 1839 the great temperance reformation began to take on new life, and soon attracted universal attention and shook the whole land. The Washingtonian movement of 1840 went over the land like a tidal wave and 600,000 drunkards left their cups. While the movement elevated and extended temperance sentiment, it is estimated 450,000 men who had reformed returned to their drinking habits, and the need of prohibition of the traffic began to take form, resulting in the Maine laws of 1850.

Pledge Signing

(b) Socialism. This was a reform backwards. In 1826 Socialism was introduced by the coming of Robert Owen. Socialistic Communities were organized, but soon perished. In 1842 there was a revival of Socialism under the name of Fourierism, supported by men and women of literary culture. "Christianity was tested in withstanding these assaults." They perished of their own internal weakness, and evangelical Christianity lived on in power.

(c) Sabbath Reform. In this same period Sabbath reform was agitated. In the new states Sunday was chiefly a day of amusement, horse racing, and dissipation. But Sabbath associations, unions, and the Churches took up the battle, and conditions were much improved. It was found that the Christian Sabbath is one of the pillars of Christian civilization and free government.

(d) Anti-slavery. The great anti-slavery reform started on a bolder and wider career soon after 1830, profoundly stirring the Nation and producing strife, divisions, bitterness, and mobs. After 1843 it entered largely into politics, and the Churches were seriously disturbed by its presence.

Abolition

These and other movements made this an era of agitations, filling the air with the dust of strife and the din of tumults. The direct work of the Churches was affected, their attention distracted, their energies divided, and their religious activity embarrassed. Still these may be said to be chiefly moral and religious movements, growing out of the quickened intellectual, moral, and religious life of the Church, and in spite of them religious bodies grew in number, strength, and efficiency beyond any period in ancient or modern times.

Agitation and Advance

II. Pioneering in the West

1. Crowding the frontier. Methodist itinerants entered the Northwest Territory, north of the Ohio River, in 1797. In 1802 settled work was begun in Indiana. In 1803 the vanguard moved on to Michigan. In 1804 Benjamin Young entered Illinois. In 1807 the gospel according to Methodism was carried into the Missouri Territory, which then formed a part of Louisiana. In 1820 preaching was begun in St. Louis. In 1826 Texas was invaded. The Rock River Conference, now the northernmost of four Conferences in Illinois, consisted when organized in 1840 of all of Northern Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. "Before Kansas, Nebraska, the Dakotas, Colorado, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Wyoming were admitted as States in the Union, Methodist Conferences, missions, districts, circuits, and stations had touched every square mile where human beings could be found."

The Church in the Wilderness

The frontier in the beginning of this period, as may thus be seen, was now well out toward the Mississippi, where the bold missionaries of the cross, prostrated by fevers, wasted by malaria, living in cabins, feeding on coarsest food, and often encountering reckless, godless, and degraded men, more malicious and savage than wild beasts, were pushing on the borders of the Church and laying the religious and moral foundation of great religious

Pioneers of the Cross

States. J. B. Finley, Jacob Young, Jesse Walker, Peter Cartwright, Peter Akers, Alfred Brunson, and Aaron Wood were men of extraordinary constitution, who preached on large circuits and districts that would now include a Conference, and lived to be heroes, venerable in years, revered and loved. It often took them six weeks to pass around their circuits of hundreds of miles, by new roads, narrow trails, across swamps, and bridgeless streams, sleeping at night under the stars, cooking their simple food in the forest. The historian McMaster says of the circuit rider's labors: "He knew the Bible as he knew his own name. . . . This, with a good constitution, a horse, and a pair of saddlebags, was equipment enough. What he should eat or wherewith he should be clothed concerned him not. 'The Lord will provide' was his comfortable belief, and experience justified his faith. His circuit was of such an extent that he was constantly on the route; but it mattered not. Devoted to his calling, he rode his circuit in spite of every obstacle man or nature could put in his way. No settlement was so remote, no rain was so drenching, no river so swollen, no cold so bitter as to deter him in his work, or to prevent him from keeping an engagement to preach to a handful of frontiersmen. Over such men his influence was boundless." Nor was the preacher wont to complain of hardships. An extract from a letter written by the Rev. John Meek, a pioneer Ohio itinerant, reveals the common spirit. He writes: "I will here say those were the happiest days of my life—log cabins to preach in, puncheon floors to sleep on, long rides, corn bread and milk to eat, a constant succession of kind friends to make welcome, and the love of God in the soul, a house high up in heaven in prospect, and the blessed promise of, 'Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world,' gave the mind a most pleasing variety and caused the time to move on most agreeably."

One of the most effective of these foundation builders was Jesse Walker. In 1806 he was missionary to Illinois.

In the summer he traveled long distances, preaching wherever he could gather a congregation. In winter, his progress blocked by storms and snow, he visited the people in their cabins, exhorting and praying with each family.

St. Louis in 1820 was almost entirely Roman Catholic or given up to infidelity, and the people were very dissipated and wicked. Jesse Walker, with two young preachers, rode into the city. They could not even find lodgings. People laughed at or cursed them. The young preachers, disgusted and discouraged, rode off, leaving Walker sitting on his horse alone, with nowhere to lay his head. He started South, but after he had gone eighteen miles, returned dinnerless but determined, and found a place in an indifferent inn. With the motto, "I have come in the name of Jesus Christ to take St. Louis, and by the grace of God I will do it," he went to work. He taught to pay expenses; cut logs across the Mississippi, floated them in and built a chapel, and went to Conference with seventy members. It was such heroism that gave us our blessed heritage. To such men as the rank and file of the Methodist ministry America will forever owe a debt of gratitude inexpressible. Through their unrewarded or poorly rewarded toil the Church was growing everywhere, and the Nation was being made religious and moral.

Invasion of St. Louis

In 1830 Walker began work in Chicago; soon he had gathered a class; in 1832 the first Quarterly Meeting was held "in an old log schoolhouse which served for a parsonage, parlor, kitchen, and audience room." In 1834 the first church was built.

By 1836 great changes were in progress in the Southwest. Methodism had extended to Texas. Martin Ruter resigned the presidency of Allegheny College and threw himself into the dangers and difficulties there with such abandon that toil and exposure brought on his death in 1838. Abel Stevens spent some months there in heroic service, and returned North to write the standard History of Methodism. There is no

doubt that the work of these and other missionaries helped to bring Texas into the United States.

Stevens says: "The missionaries, and especially the Methodist missionaries, were the real founders of our Pacific empire. Not only did they penetrate its savage wilderness and found the first permanent settlements on its rolling rivers, but they fostered the American spirit among the little band of settlers; they not only called the attention of the National Government to the importance of that remote region, but on their few visits to the East they preached constantly about the work and awakened interest in the country, thus encouraging the spirit of emigration which peopled Oregon and saved it to the Union." The first Protestant sermon preached on the Pacific Coast was preached on September 28, 1834.

The Northwest

2. A new instrumentality. While all the older means of extending the work were still used, and the itinerants were everywhere and incessant in their revival efforts, and Churches were growing in numbers and strength in the cities and towns, a new means of stirring and winning the rural regions especially was providentially inaugurated in Kentucky. In 1799, two Magee brothers, one a Presbyterian minister and the other a Methodist local preacher, started on a preaching tour through this still new country. At their second meeting on Muddy River many families came to their services in their covered wagons and camped in the woods. Presbyterians and Methodists worked together at first, but the institution was more in harmony with the spirit and methods of the Methodists, and adopting it, they soon gave it a more definite organization and control. A week was usually devoted to each camp-meeting. The ground was underbrushed, leaving the great trees of the virgin forest for shelter and shade. A circle of tents or booths, and later of rude cabins, or a series of circles, was erected so as to inclose a central auditorium, at one side of which was a rude platform or pulpit for the

Origin of Camp-meetings

preaching. Often there were preaching places on the outside also, but at night the inner circle was lighted by torches or great fire-stands; and the whole was governed by rules and a temporary police. The poetic grandeur of the primitive forest, lighted by night by the stars above and the torches below, resounding with hymns which seemed like "the voice of many waters;" the powerful eloquence of the early itinerants, "who were stimulated to their best by the conditions;" the cries of the penitents, the prayers of the saints, and the shouts of the new-born converts could not fail to stir the religious enthusiasm to its utmost. And when thousands, even ten, twenty, and more thousands, would spend a week in almost continuous services, it is not to be wondered at that there were excesses of feeling, much discussed physical phenomena, and sometimes disorder on the part of persons of the ruder sort. Soon persons were falling as dead men under deep conviction, "like corn before a storm of wind." On one occasion in Kentucky some twenty thousand were present, and the number that fell as dead was reckoned at three thousand, several Presbyterian ministers being among them. Then "the cries of precious souls struggling into life" would be succeeded by "the shouts of redeemed captives," and by the end of the week there would be few unconverted persons left, and the glad host would disperse toward their distant homes, making the forests ring with praises.

Form and Power of Camp-meetings

McKendree, not yet bishop, had charge of this district, and with his keen vision and wise choice of means to an end, took hold of the camp-meeting as a great instrument of good, promoted it wherever he could, and soon it was in use throughout most of the land. Lee tells us that by 1893 the camp-meeting was in use in Virginia, and on Brunswick Circuit at a camp-meeting more than a hundred living witnesses were raised up to attest the saving power of God. He says that the fact that this was one of the most prosperous years the Church

McKendree Uses Camp-meeting

had known since its origin could be attributed to the camp-meeting. Stevens tells us that these early years of the century was a time of almost universal revivals, and especially of successful camp-meetings. Asbury wrote in 1797: "I have good reason to believe that upon the Eastern shore (of Maryland) four thousand have been converted since the first of May. Ten camp-meetings north of New York in about two months, and more laid out. I hope for one hundred thousand convicted, converted, restored, or sanctified." It is difficult to conceive the good that was done in the camp-meeting during those years. Marvin Richardson writes of one in Westchester County, N. Y., in 1805, which Asbury says exceeded any he attended, that "from it revivals spread east, west, north, and south; the Spirit of the Lord was poured upon the city of New York in an unusual manner, and Brooklyn shared largely in the refreshing."

But the great field of the camp-meeting was in the West. James B. Finley describes one in his "Autobiography." He says: "A vast crowd of twenty-five thousand was together. The noise was like the roar of Niagara. The sea of human beings seemed to be agitated as by a storm. I counted seven ministers all preaching at the same time—some on stumps, others on wagons, and one, William Burke, standing on a tree which in falling had lodged against another." He, a genuine child of the wilderness, of stalwart frame, had to fly to the woods to recover his self-possession. When he returned, he says: "I stepped up on a log. The scene that then presented itself to my eye was indescribable. At one time I saw at least five hundred people swept down in a moment, as if a battery of a thousand guns had been opened upon them." He fled again, but was converted the next day, as hundreds were, in that strange meeting. Quinn, who attended and superintended one hundred and thirty or forty camp-meetings, wrote: "As an evidence of the great good resulting from camp-meetings, it is a fact that a large proportion of the members, and

Finley's Description

many eminently useful ministers, in the Western country have been brought to a knowledge of salvation at these meetings."

In those years of rapid immigration into the States between the Alleghanies and the Mississippi, along with many good people, there flocked "bankrupts, refugees from justice, deserters of wives and children, and all sorts of reckless adventurers." Drunkenness prevailed, weapons were carried and too often used, and but for the Methodist movement and itinerant the country would have been practically without any religious influence. Much of the population was likely to sink into barbarism, but Methodism, with the camp-meeting and the revival, "quickly pervaded the imperiled region and effected the salvation of the West."

Good Effects of Camp-meetings

3. **New leaders.** Limitation of space forbids more than a passing notice to a chosen few of the leaders of the ever-increasing Methodist host of this period.

(a) William McKendree. We have already noted the election of McKendree to the episcopacy by the General Conference of 1808. He was well born and carefully reared in the English Church. He served in the army of the Revolution, reaching the rank of adjutant, and was present at the surrender of Cornwallis. Converted at thirty under Easter, he was soon led out into the itinerancy by Cox, the revivalist of flaming zeal, but not without struggles, because he saw the greatness and sacredness of the ministry. The sagacious Asbury quickly saw McKendree's qualities and kept him moving on large circuits in Virginia, into South Carolina, thence to the Greenbrier, among the Alleghanies, and on to the Kanawha. One circuit was not enough, but he had four, and traveled each a quarter of the year in succession. So he came into the West when the qualifications of a founder were needed. He became quick and keen, calm and observant, a man of order and precision. He developed the power of analysis, overwhelming power of argument, and great ease in dealing

His First Work in the West

with large themes. When he passed into the valley of the Mississippi he was the man of the times, capable of leading the Church in the wilderness. In two years seven circuits of great extent had been organized, and his district had to be changed into three. He laid effectively the moral foundations of great commonwealths. He seized the "camp-meeting" which sprang up in Kentucky, when hundreds and even thousands of people would camp for a week in the forests and give themselves to intense religious activities, and so promoted its best features that it was soon a mighty instrument of God everywhere. He was the recognized leader of such giants as Jacob Young, John Sale, James B. Finley, William Swayze, Charles Elliott, and a host of others. It was no marvel that after a sermon of wonderful sweep of thought and overwhelming eloquence, he was elected bishop in 1808, over the great and worthy Lee. At the next General Conference, the first delegated General Conference, McKendree made an opening address, an example ever since followed by the bishops, which showed wide and wise statesmanship. Stevens well says that he became a man of the saintliest character, a preacher of transcendent power, a chief founder of the denomination in the West, an ecclesiastical administrator of scarcely rivaled ability. With such men filling the ranks of the itinerancy and rising into leadership, the Methodist Episcopal Church was bound to grow by leaps and bounds.

(b) Joshua Soule, elected bishop in 1820, and again in 1824, became a dominating personality in the Church. He was a native of Maine, joined a class at sixteen, and began preaching as the boy preacher at seventeen. He became an able debater with Calvinists, Unitarians, and Universalists in those days of theological strife. He was effective as presiding elder, wise as book publisher and editor of the *Methodist Magazine,* and became a recognized authority on the constitutional law of the Church.

(c) John Emory was the first representative of another type

of man in the episcopacy. He was a student. Admitted to the bar at nineteen, he soon yielded to the call to preach, and was rapidly promoted by his brethren of the Philadelphia Conference. He was sent to the first General Conference to which he was eligible at the age of twenty-seven and made missionary secretary. Was sent as a fraternal delegate to the British Conference when thirty-one to adjust difficult matters about Canadian Methodism. When thirty-five, though not a member of the General Conference, was made one of its secretaries and came within six votes of being elected bishop. When thirty-nine was made assistant book agent, and when forty-three was elected bishop. He died in 1835, at forty-six years of age, the result of accident, deeply lamented by the whole Church. Intellectual gifts, mental training, mass of acquired knowledge, and judicial qualities made him successful everywhere.

III. Internal Changes

Meanwhile Methodism was passing through internal changes that should be noted.

The importance of continuity in the work of educational institutions led the General Conference of 1820 to authorize the appointment of ministers to positions in the schools of the Church for more than two years. This may be said to be the first break in the "time limit" on appointments, which at this time was still two years. This Conference also voted in favor of the election of presiding elders by the Annual Conference on nomination by the bishop, and the presiding elders were made an advisory council of the bishops in stationing the preachers. Joshua Soule, the father of the Constitution, who had been elected bishop, felt that this action was unconstitutional, that he could not serve as bishop under it, and presented his resignation. Then the Conference voted to suspend the action concerning the presiding elders until the next General Conference, and asked Soule to withdraw his resig-

Time Limit and Elective Presiding Eldership

nation. He declined to do so. Bishop McKendree agreed with Soule; Bishop Roberts did so to a certain degree, and Bishop George was silent. The Conference of 1824 declared these resolutions null and void, and again elected Soule a bishop.

A persistent agitation was carried on at this time against the episcopacy and presiding eldership. The condition became acute through the expulsion of Dennis F. Dorsey and William C. Pool on the charge of the dissemination of literature that disturbed the harmony and peace of the Church.

Objections to Church Order

Their appeals to the General Conference of 1828 were not sustained. Much feeling was generated. Preachers and members were expelled; some withdrew, and the final result was the organization of the Methodist Protestant Church in 1830. The Methodists in Upper Canada were until this time connected with the Methodist Episcopal Church, but were now, because of complications, allowed to become a separate body.

IV. Growth During this Period

This was a period of wide expansion and rapid numerical growth. "The whole spirit of Methodism was diffusive. Its preachers were all missionaries. Every one of them 'was an extensionist;' enlarging his field of operations in every possible direction, opening a new preaching place at this point and that, his circuit in this manner growing steadily until it had to be divided. Thus in circuit and district and State, American Methodism won ever-widening triumphs for after years." In 1808 there had been five hundred traveling ministers, two thousand local preachers, and one hundred and forty thousand Church members. The General Conference of 1832 especially was filled with joy over the increase of members in the Church. Over three hundred thousand had been the increase of the single quadrennium, so that more than two thousand ministers and half a million members were now enrolled. New educational institutions had been planted, better

churches built, and the Church had grown in strength in every way, paralleling the development of the country. An illustration is to be seen in connection with the burning of the Book Concern on February 18, 1836, involving a loss of $250,000. A few years before such a loss would have been disastrous, but now $88,000 was collected and added to the insurance and better buildings resulted. The closing years of this period saw the greatest growth in the Church's history up to that time. In the single quadrennium (1840-1844) it is estimated that three hundred and seventy-five thousand people were added to the Church.

Widespread Growth and Development

In 1839 the first centenary of Methodism was celebrated. October 21st was selected as the day in commemoration of the forming of the first class of Methodists on October 21, 1739. Sermons were preached in nearly all of the churches on October 20th, and a Centennial Fund of $600,000 was subscribed for missions, education, and superannuated ministers. It was a revelation of what the Church could do financially, and an inspiration to large benevolence.

Lesson Outline:

I. External Movements.
   1. Population.
   2. Inventions.
   3. Reforms.

II. Pioneering in the West.
   1. Crowding the frontier.
   2. A new instrumentality.
   3. New leaders.

III. Internal Changes.

IV. Growth During the Period.

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Topics for Special Study:

1. The influence of Methodism in the Central West.
2. The physical phenomena of early camp meetings.

Topics for Class Discussion:

1. Describe external movements of this period which affected the life and growth of the Church.
2. What is to be said of the relation between the Church and moral reforms?
3. Tell of the labors and service of the early Methodist itinerants.
4. What can you say of the life and work of McKendree?
5. Estimate the value of the camp meeting as an evangelistic agency.
6. Why have camp meetings largely passed away?
7. What were some important changes of polity during this period?
8. What of the growth of the Church during the period?
9. When was the first centenary of Methodism celebrated?

CHAPTER VIII

CHANGES AND DEVELOPMENTS
(1844-1900)

I. An Old Trouble and Division.

1. Position of Methodism on slavery. It is rather startling to think in these days that Whitefield, the "Greatheart" of early Methodism, was a slaveholder. Whitefield advocated the introduction of slavery into Georgia for the good of the Colony and of the slaves. At his death there were fifty slaves, men, women, and children, belonging to his Orphan House. He bequeathed his "lands, Negroes, books, and furniture" to the Countess of Huntington. But the great fact that Whitefield could hold slaves from motives of humanity, emphasizes by contrast the position of John Wesley, when he described the trade in men as "that execrable sum of all villanies." It was the burden of his letter to Wilberforce, the last he ever penned.

Wesley and Whitefield

The fact that Philip Gatch liberated his nine slaves, that had come to him by marriage, before 1780 shows how early the feeling against slavery had taken possession of the American Methodists. The Conference of that year raised its voice against the evil. At a Conference beginning on May 25, 1784, it was agreed that members who "buy and sell slaves," if "they buy with no other design than to hold them as slaves, and have been previously warned, shall be expelled, and be permitted to sell on no consideration;" and that "local preachers who will not emancipate their slaves in States where the laws admit shall be called to account;" that "traveling preach-

Early American Methodists against Slavery

ers who are now or hereafter shall be possessed of slaves, and shall refuse to manumit them where the laws permit" shall "be employed no more." The Christmas Conference of 1784 adopted comprehensive measures for the "extirpation" of slavery. Every Methodist was required to execute and record within twelve months after notice from the assistant (or pastor, as we would now say), a legal instrument emancipating all slaves at specified ages, or withdraw or be excluded within one year. No person holding slaves could be admitted to membership or to the Lord's Supper. Buying, selling, or giving away slaves, unless to free them, was forbidden on expulsion from the Church. These rules could only be applied where the State laws permitted, and the Methodists of Virginia were given two years in which to decide on their compliance. Much hostile excitement followed. Coke was threatened by mobs for upholding the rules as he preached through Virginia. Many slaves were emancipated, however, by loyal Methodists. The opposition proved so strong that in six months the rules were suspended. It is a great pity this was done. The young Church seemed to be conscious of a divine inspiration to overthrow the monster evil. The Revolution had inspired the spirit of liberty. Leading statesmen were with the Methodists. Washington told Coke and Asbury that he agreed with their sentiments. It was their crisis hour and they failed. Methodism had grown most rapidly in the South. Threats, persecutions, mobs prevailed. Coke and Asbury thought it wise to compromise. Had Methodism only been true to her inspiration she might have saved the Church a schism and the country a terrible war. The rules were suspended. They were never again put in force in the whole Church, and slavery lived on and grew. The Church, however, was not silent. When it suspended the rule in 1785, it declared, "we do hold in deepest abhorrence the practice of slavery, and shall not cease to seek its destruction by all wise and prudent means." Conference after Conference spoke in no uncertain tones of

Coke and Asbury Against Slavery

"eradicating this enormous evil" (1796); and that "if any of our traveling preachers marry persons holding slaves, and thereby become slaveholders, they shall be excluded from our societies, unless they execute a legal emancipation of their slaves, agreeably to the laws of the State wherein they lived" (1800). This was practically re-enacted in 1804. In 1819 Jacob Gruber was tried for preaching against slavery. Roger B. Taney, afterward Chief Justice, defended him, affirming that the Methodist Church "has steadily in view the abolition of slavery;" that "no slaveholder is allowed to be a minister in it;" and said, "Slavery is a blot on our national character." Gruber was acquitted, but the trial shows how the friends of slavery were becoming more aggressive. Before their aggressive spirit many leaders in the Church sought peace by compromise; but the Church never officially granted a minister the right or privilege of holding slaves.

The rapid extension of Methodism in the northern West increased the number who opposed slavery, and the agitation for abolition in New England by such men as Garrison and Whittier aroused the Methodists of that section. Fourteen of the sixteen delegates from New England to the General Conference of 1836 were abolitionists. This General Conference received many petitions against slavery, and the abolition excitement ran high. The Conference, however, condemned abolition, censured Storrs and Norris for lecturing on abolition during the session of the Conference, and disclaimed any "right, wish, or intention to interfere in the civil and political relations between master and slaves." The tone of the opposition to slavery was very much modified in the General Conference of 1840. The bishops deprecated all agitation, and a spirit of compromise was manifested in those who opposed slavery.

Abolition

2. The crisis. The question of slavery overshadowed every other in the General Conference of 1844. Francis A. Harding of the Baltimore Conference had been expelled for holding slaves received through his wife. His appeal re-

sulted in the General Conference re-affirming the action of the Baltimore Conference. It was found that Bishop James O. Andrew was a slaveholder by bequest, inheritance, and marriage. After several different actions were proposed it was voted by nearly two-thirds majority "that it is the sense of this General Conference that he desist from the exercise of this office so long as this impediment remains." Those opposed to slavery felt that this would be the least that would save the Church from disaster in the North. The delegates from the South protested that his action would make it impossible for them to continue their work in the slave States, and necessitate their forming a separate Church. The only thing possible seemed to be a separation, and a provisional plan of separation was adopted. This was not meant as a finality. It was only intended to meet a necessity which might arise. "It was made dependent on the concurrence of three-fourths of the members of the Annual Conferences. It was made dependent also upon the observance of the provisions of the plan for a boundary line between the two Churches should a new Church be formed."

Bishop Andrew

Provisional Plan for Separation

The Southern delegates did not wait for the anticipated necessity, but before leaving New York called a convention for May 1, 1845. This body voted that all jurisdiction of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church over the Southern Conferences was dissolved, and a new Church, under the title of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, should be formed. The provisional plan for a separation was not concurred in by three-fourths of the Annual Conferences. A called General Conference of the delegates from the Southern Conferences met on May 1, 1846, and in spite of said non-concurrence of three-fourths of the Conferences, organized the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. They did not observe the proposed boundary line of the provisional plan.

Organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South

When the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal

Church met in 1848, it simply declared the provisional plan had not been followed, hence it was null and void.

3. **The Methodist Episcopal Church, South.** When organized it had 1,519 preachers, 334,608 white members, and 124,961 Negro members. Much feeling was aroused, even bitter feeling along the borders, and the two Churches went their own way for many a year. Both grew rapidly till the War of the Rebellion broke upon the country. The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, suffered terribly amid the horrors and destruction of that fearful struggle. It lost a quarter of a million members. What were left were in the midst of appalling poverty. The bishops, in 1865, sent out an address full of martial heroism. The Church answered. The General Conference of 1866 rose to the occasion: introduced lay delegation; abolished the probationary system; removed the class-meeting from being a compulsory test of membership; created District Conferences; extended the pastoral term from two to four years; set up the Publishing House and Mission Board, and elected four bishops. In spite of dark days the Church was resuscitated, regained its losses, and in later years has made magnificent progress. It has nearly 8,000 traveling preachers and 1,882,402 members.

Growth of the New Church

4. **Reapproach to unity.** In 1872 fraternal relations were resumed between the two Methodisms, and as Bishop E. E. Hoss says, "the General Conference of 1894 initiated the movement which has since been fully developed for federation. Out of this federation has come a common hymn-book, a common catechism, a common order of worship, a union publishing house in China, and the consolidation into one Church of all the Methodisms in Japan. Whereunto it will further grow no man can tell." Many fervent souls are praying that in the good providence of God the time may soon come when all differences will disappear, and Methodism again be one, not only in spirit and doctrine, but in form and activity.

Coming Together Again

II. The Period of Civil Strife.

1. **Progress of early years.** When the General Conference met in 1848, after the departure of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, it was found that there were 3,841 preachers and 639,066 members. In spite of trouble between the two Churches along the border, there was rapid growth in membership in all the Northern States, so that by 1852 there were 4,513 preachers and 728,700 members. It was an era of general prosperity, and so of church building. The older, plain, and temporary buildings began to be replaced by more permanent and elaborate structures. Prosperity is seen in the planting of new educational institutions also.

Church and College Building

At the General Conference of 1856 it was found that the growth in membership had not been as rapid as in the previous quadrennium. The number of traveling preachers was 6,610, and the number of members 799,431, an increase of 70,731. This more tardy growth was laid to the great financial prosperity, the anti-slavery agitation, and the more careful gathering of statistics.

Gold was discovered in California in 1848, and the news spread rapidly over the whole field. In 1849 there was an invasion of the coast by goldseekers. Roberts, a Methodist preacher, was there to meet them. Soon Isaac Owen and William Taylor were sent, taking churches with them. Taylor and Owen preached in the streets and miners' camps, and "the gospel was fairly let loose among the gambling and drinking saloons, and was ringing up the mountain sides and along the streams of this golden but sinful land. Backsliders were reclaimed, sinners awakened, and Christians rallied." Bishop Peck, who lived eight years in that State, said: "To Methodism belongs the honor of saving the State of California to freedom. Until recently it was equal there to all the Protestant denominations put together."

California

It is well to remember that in 1850 there was not a foot of railroad west of the Mississippi; in 1869 the first transcontinental railroad was completed. To-day the Pacific Coast and all the plains and mountains between are dotted with Methodist churches and covered by Conferences.

2. The revival of 1857-'58. It began in a humble way, and at a point unlooked for by men. "Mr. J. C. Lamphere, of New York, a devoted city missionary of the Dutch Reformed Church, while pursuing his regular rounds of duty, inquired in spirit, 'Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?' Immediately it occurred to him that a union prayer meeting of business men, from twelve to one o'clock, midday, would help the cause of religion and introduce its influence into important circles." It was tried in the Fulton Street Church on September 22, 1857. It began small. It grew rapidly. It began at a time of great financial distress. Men's minds were easily turned to religion. The movement spread to other cities and to towns and villages. It became a revival that swept over the land. It was estimated that 50,000 professed conversion in one week, and that during the whole revival 300,000 were added to the Church. From November, 1857, to November, 1858, 136,036 members were added to the Methodist Episcopal Church.

A Prayer Revival

3. Civil perils.

(a) Slavery. The departure of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, did not settle the anti-slavery question. It rather emphasized some phases of it, and the agitations along the border, together with the political discussions and feeling, kept the question before the Church in each of its General Conferences and in the Church papers. There were conservatives, constitutional abolitionists, and radical abolitionists, and between them there was little rest for the Church. The General Conference of 1860 met in Buffalo, N. Y. It framed a new article on slavery which practically condemned it as unchristian, and forbade it for Methodists. Two of the

border Conferences repudiated the new statute, and practically seceded from the Church. Feeling was intense.

(b) The Civil War. The firing upon Fort Sumter settled the controversy between the conservatives and radicals in the Methodist Church. The Conferences, almost without a dissenting vote, passed resolutions sustaining the Government. Such was the loyalty of the Church, that in 1864 Abraham Lincoln wrote in response to a message of sympathy and approbation from the General Conference, "It is no fault of others that the Methodist Church sends more soldiers to the field, more nurses to the hospitals, and more prayers to heaven than any."

Patriotism in the Civil War

Statistics show a great religious decline in the years of the war, 1860-1864. There was a decrease in the Methodist Episcopal Church of 66,127. A part of this was due to the defection in the Baltimore Conference. Too large a part was due to the demoralization under the deleterious influences of camp life. More of it was due to the patriotism of the Methodist volunteers who fell in battle or died of disease in camp or hospital before their time.

Decline in Religion

(c) Effects of the war. "After the war came the demoralizing influences incident to a post-bellum period. Gross immorality, crime, luxury, extravagance, reckless pecuniary ventures, intemperance, graft, characterized this period. So alarming became the symptoms that the newspapers often spoke of the "carnival of crime." It almost seemed as if the foundations had given away, and many lost heart and faith and hope. But gradually it was seen that the war had taught some good religious lessons. Some rationalistic tendencies were restrained; a deeper sense of dependence on God was apparent; there was a clearer recognition of God's overruling power in the affairs of the nations, and these steadied the Churches and the Nation till the time of peril was past.

Carnival of Crime

Steadying Forces

III. Representation and Responsibility.

1. Introductory. The General Conference of 1864 met in Philadelphia, and "the atmosphere of the national conflict pervaded the assembly." There was no sign of retreat, but rather a hopeful optimism that took forward steps. A change in the General Rule on Slavery was proposed to the Annual Conferences, making it more definite. The attendance on class meeting was made practically voluntary. The time limit on the pastorate was changed from two to three years. The Church Extension Society was launched. The Conference arranged for a farther advance into the Southern States. Already the Kentucky, Missouri, Arkansas, and West Virginia Conferences had been formed. The Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Georgia, and Alabama Conferences soon followed, and in 1867 the Central Tennessee College was opened in Nashville.

The General Conference also arranged for the Centennial of American Methodism in 1866. Memorial sermons were preached in most of the churches on the first Sunday in January of that year, and a thank offering of $8,709,498 was received. The missionary and other collections were also largely increased, showing the financial growth and strength of Methodism. Bishop Simpson, now the aggressive leader of the Church, inspired the building of a series of better churches, more churchly in appearance, of the Gothic type of architecture, in many of the principal cities and towns.

Centennial

2. Representation.

(a) Of laymen. The General Conference of 1868 met in Chicago. It provided for the perpetuation of the Board of Education, and sanctioned the organization of the Freedmen's Aid Society. But the great question before it was that of Lay Representation. A large delegation of laymen appeared, led by such men as Gen. Clinton B. Fiske and Governor William Claflin. It was not a new movement. We have not space to

relate its history. Methodism under Wesley called the laity into Church activity. As Bishop Simpson said, "It called upon men to pray; it called on women to speak."

The Methodist Episcopal Church in America, through unavoidable circumstances, was organized by preachers. Its use of laymen as local preachers, exhorters, class leaders, trustees, stewards, and Sunday-school superintendents, and of laymen generally in all social and revival work, was one reason of its growth. From the beginning there were those who thought laymen ought to be in the chief councils of the Church. The Hammett schism in South Carolina in 1791; the O'Kelly secession in Virginia with its "Republican Methodists;" the Methodist Protestant Church, organized in 1830, and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, by its action of 1866, had all included lay representation in their schemes of government. Because of its emphasis by all these seceders, any one who favored lay representation, for a time was called a "radical," and "radicalism" was thought to be "destructivism." But Bishop Simpson and many loyal ministers favored it; *Zion's Herald,* the *Philadelphia Advocate, The Methodist,* and some Western Church papers took it up. The tide was turned; the laymen who appeared at the General Conference of 1868 were proof of the force and character the movement had attained; and after a great debate the General Conference sent down to the members and ministers a proposition to change the Discipline so as to admit laymen to the General Conference. When the General Conference of 1872 met in Brooklyn it was found that the proposition had carried in the Annual Conferences by more than a three-fourths majority, and 129 lay delegates, provisionally elected, were seated with the 292 ministerial delegates.

The Demand for Lay Representation

(b) Of women. When the General Conference of 1888 convened in New York, it was found that five women had been elected as lay delegates. A protest was made against their being seated, and the matter referred to a committee which

reported them ineligible. In the General Conference of 1896 the question rose again by the election of four women as lay delegates. Their right was challenged, and as a compromise the delegates were allowed to sit under a title in dispute and the question was submitted to the Annual Conferences to change the law so as to allow the election of women.

3. **The new Constitution.** The General Conference of 1900 submitted to the Annual Conferences of 1901 a Constitution for the Church, and it was adopted by the requisite vote. This gave to laymen the same number of delegates in the General Conference that the ministers have, and women were admitted as laymen.

It has been suggested by Abel Stevens that this was the culmination of a great epoch-making innovation. It placed the Church properly before the world on the question of ecclesiastical authority. It placed it in harmony with modern thought, so securing for itself the future. But, above all, the reform is of incalculable value to the Church from the new developments of her lay energy which it has occasioned.

Gains of Change

4. **Responsibility.**

(a) Assumed by laymen. Rights ever mean responsibilities. The laymen of Methodism could not come into their new relations to the Church without feeling a new sense of responsibility; and this new sense of responsibility must eventuate in new activities. "At the session of the General Conference in which laymen first shared, several of the chief financial interests of the Church were reorganized and placed upon a more business-like basis; precarious "societies" were converted into Church "Boards" immediately subject to the General Conference; and the "Book Concern" was for the first time opened for the trained business talents of laymen, by reason of which it took on that enlarged activity which has made it pre-eminent among the publishing houses of Christendom. Laymen are

Work of Laymen

now found on the "Boards" of all the benevolences of the Church and have much to do with the wider extension of the work of Methodism. Laymen are taking more and more of the responsibility of the finances of the local Churches, as they should do, thereby releasing the pastors for their more directly ministerial labors. They are also more and more the chief dependence of the Boards of Trustees of colleges and universities. Laymen like Isaac Rich, Lee Claflin, and Jacob Sleeper, founders of Boston University (1869); Drew of the Drew Theological Seminary (1866); Mrs. Garrett of the Garrett Biblical Institute (1854); the Remington Brothers of Syracuse University (1870), and Gammon of the Gammon School of Theology (1873), showed that laymen were getting the cause of ministerial education on their hearts. The later organizations of the "Men's Brotherhood" and the "Laymen's Missionary Movement" show the rise of religious enthusiasm among the men of the Church.

(b) Assumed by women. The Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, the Woman's Home Missionary Society, the extensive and growing deaconess work, and movements like the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, led by Frances E. Willard, the first woman delegate to appear at the door of the General Conference, show how woman responded to the new responsibilities that came with enlarged privileges. The last twenty-five years may well be called the laymen's era in the history of Methodism.

Work of Women

IV. Continued History.

1. **The period 1866-1880.** The years from 1866 to 1872 saw many changes. Losses from the episcopal ranks, the wide extension of the work of the Church, and the making of many new Conferences in the West, the South, and the missionary fields made necessary the election of a number of new bishops. The General Conference met in Brooklyn in 1872, and elected eight to the episcopacy, made radical changes in the Book Concern, adopted the rule on amuse-

ments that has been so fruitful of discussion and attempts at repeal, and sent fraternal delegates to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

The General Conference of 1876 met in Baltimore. A proposition to add certain articles of faith, that had been referred to the bishops, failed because of the First Restrictive Rule. It was decided that women could not be licensed to preach. Provision was made for separate white and black Conferences. An effort to make the presiding eldership elective was defeated.

Conference of 1876

The General Conference of 1880 met in Cincinnati. It completed the arrangements for an Ecumenical Conference of Methodism, devised the ecclesiastical code, and elected four bishops.

The Ecumenical Conference met in London, September 7, 1881. Its delegates from twenty-eight branches of Methodism represented nearly six million communicants and "twenty million people directly or indirectly connected with the movement begun by John Wesley in 1739." It discussed the history and responsibilities of Methodism, and by its generation of large thoughts and holy feelings gave the movement a new impulse everywhere.

2. Recent history. We can not follow in detail the recent General Conferences. The work of the Church has flowed on in the regular channels with constantly forward movement. The present state of the Church will be touched upon in the concluding chapter of this book.

Lesson Outline:

I. An Old Trouble and Division.
   1. Position of Methodism on slavery.
   2. The crisis.
   3. The Methodist Episcopal Church, South.
   4. Reapproach to unity.

II. The Period of Civil Strife.
   1. Progress of early years.
   2. The revival of 1857-'58.
   3. Civil perils.

III. Representation and Responsibility.
   1. Introductory.
   2. Representation.
   3. The new Constitution.
   4. Responsibility.

IV. Continued History.
   1. The period of 1866-1880.
   2. Recent history.

Bibliography:

Buckley, "History of Methodism."

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Topics for Special Study:

1. Relation of the Church to slavery reform.
2. Laymen in Methodism.

Topics for Class Discussion:

1. What was the position of early Methodism on slavery?
2. What was the effect of the action of the Christmas Conference?
3. Why was the early position of the Church modified?
4. What brought on the crisis of 1844?
5. How and when was the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, organized?
6. What are the indications as to the future of the two Churches?
7. Characterize the revival of 1857.
8. Trace briefly the history of lay representation.
9. What has been the effect of lay representation?
10. Name some events of importance in the recent history of the Church.

CHAPTER IX

THE GENIUS OF METHODISM

I. The Itinerancy.

The history, and especially the rapid growth, of the Methodist Episcopal Church can not be fully understood without a study of the itinerancy. Asbury found a tendency among the early Methodist preachers to settle in the cities. He set himself against this with an iron purpose, and himself kept itinerating all about the country at such a rate as to set a magnificent example.

At first Asbury was not willing that a minister should stay more than six months in one place, but as the Conference came to have more regular annual sessions, to which the ministers made reports, and at which they received their appointments, they were allowed to stay for a year. Some were appointed for a second year, and some remained for a third year, until the General Conference in 1804 made a rule that no preacher should be appointed to the same place more than two years in succession. This taking of men in early youth, fresh in their religious enthusiasm, and thrusting them into the thick of the battle, and keeping them on the move so constantly, preaching almost night and day, had several distinct effects on them and their work.

Evolution of Itinerancy

1. **It made men do quickly what they had to do.** They had no time to loiter. The King's business demanded haste. As soon as their appointments were read off, they were on horseback and away to their fields, talking with individuals, praying with families, preaching in the forests, in private houses, barns, public buildings, and hastily-constructed churches. A rule was that they

Rapid Movements

were not to spend more time than was necessary in any one place, so on they moved, restlessly, strenuously, pushing the work of winning converts, organizing societies, and forming circuits. They shrank from no danger or privation. Difficulties only aroused them to greater efforts and cultured them to mightier faith.

2. It developed heroes. Stevens sums up so well his study of the itinerancy and the itinerants, that we can not do better than to quote him. "Extraordinary indeed, a study of inexpressible interest and profound lessons, is the history of that singular ministerial system of Methodism which we call the itinerancy. The development of character, of energy, and success which it has revealed can not fail to astonish us. Its roll is glorious with martyrs and heroes. What clerical men since the apostolic age ever traveled like these? Their salaries, or 'allowances,' scarcely provided them with clothes. Most of these itinerants had to locate on account of broken health or the sufferings of their families. Nearly half of those whose deaths are recorded died before they were thirty years old; about two-thirds before they had spent twelve years in the laborious service. They fell martyrs to their work." Only the strong could endure it long. By their hard discipline they became marked men. They became giants, each in his own way and after his own pattern.

Martyrs of the Cross

3. It made them preaching-revivalists. We put these two words together intentionally. The itinerants felt that they were "evangelists" of the gospel—heralds of the good news—in the sense in which Webster defines the word. "They were preachers who were authorized to preach, but who had not charge of a particular Church, and were not allowed to administer the Eucharist."

(a) Effective preachers. So they preached incessantly, day and night, to a few and to crowds, in doors and out of doors, anywhere and everywhere, and by this incessant preaching they grew to be effective preachers. In the histories we read of

the eloquence of the preachers from Captain Webb to Bishop Simpson. All have heard of Summerfield, Bascom, Parker, and Bigelow. But the ranks were full of men almost as eloquent—men like Hope Hull, of singularly persuasive eloquence; of James Russell, a master of assemblies. The latter learned to read after he joined the South Carolina Conference, and yet early showed himself to be "capable of the highest natural oratory, striking with awe or melting with pathos his crowded" congregations. He became a good English scholar, famous in three States as the most eloquent preacher of his time. Bishop Wightman says, "He could move five thousand hearers at a camp-meeting with the ease of one born to command, and with the momentum of a landslide." President Olin, who heard him after he had passed his prime, when broken by toils and disasters, says: "The vividness and luxuriance of his imagination, his original mind, his shrewdness of perception, his urgency of argument, his inimitable aptness of illustration, his powers of rapid and novel combination were unimpaired. He abounded in metaphors and their effect on the congregation was often like that of a succession of shocks of electricity. The trophies of pardoning love were multiplied around him." Never was there developed just by preaching a race of more effective preachers.

Constant Preaching

(b) Intense revivalists. But these preachers were not content to be preachers only, without immediate results. They were intent on conversions, regenerations, sanctifications. There must be revivals or they felt they had failed. Some were like Philip Cox. He was an Englishman, too poor to buy a horse, who traveled on foot, till by a gift he was able to join the equestrians. Then, probably not being able to control his steed at first, he accidentally injured a limb. He had to rest for repairs. But a child died in the neighborhood and Cox was carried to the house to preach a funeral sermon. There were one hundred present, fifty of them unconverted. This was an opportunity for an evangelist, and sitting on a table he preached on "Ex-

Philip Cox

cept ye be converted and become as little children, ye can not enter into the Kingdom of heaven." All the fifty unconverted were converted on the spot! Think of fifty new converts shouting at the funeral of a little child! But the revival passion could not be stayed by a broken limb or a funeral. The next day Cox preached again, sitting on a table in a forest, and sixty more were converted. Asbury says that fourteen hundred were converted on that circuit in that year. At the Quarterly Conference meeting they were crying for mercy before the preachers got there, and at least two hundred and fifty were converted.

Benjamin Abbott was a man of marvelous revival power. Not only did physical manifestations follow his preaching and his prayers, but drunkards and gamblers were reformed. There are many entries in his Journal like this: "There was a shaking among the dry bones." "The wicked flew to the doors." "We had a melting time; many wept." "The Lord poured out His Spirit and the slain fell before Him like dead men; others lay as in the agonies of death, entreating God to have mercy on their souls; some found peace." "The same Jesus who raised Lazarus from the dead, raised up nine persons to praise Him as a sin-pardoning God."

Benjamin Abbott

4. It developed original characters.

(a) Eccentrics. "It is impossible that some eccentric—perhaps insane minds—should not be drawn into the ever-widening circle of their enthusiastic movement; but the vigorous discipline and exhaustive labors of the denomination controlled or expended their morbid energy; or, if these failed, the rapid but steady motion of the ecclesiastical system threw them off, and so far off that they ceased to be dangerous."

Lorenzo Dow was too eccentric to be held in the regular ranks of the itinerants, and after traveling sturdily on extensive circuits in New England, he went off like a comet, crossing all ecclesiastical orbits, everywhere attracted attention, and

often did great good. He was earnest-minded, but quaint and profound in his religious solicitude. Probably affected by the infirmities of a partial insanity, and too often swayed by uncontrolled ebullitions of humor, he was in some sense an extreme product of this ministerial system. He illustrated its tendency to culture original characters.

Lorenzo Dow

(b) Sane and wise original characters. Jacob Gruber, a German with a German face and accent, was a unique character, with a quizzical play of humor and sarcasm, unrivaled power of quaint and apposite illustrations, and an aptness and humor in telling a story that was simply irresistible.

Jacob Gruber

Billy Hibbard, with a somewhat singularly constituted mind that went through fearful despondency to great joy in believing, was a ministerial wit of the highest quality. Woe be to the friend or foe who called it forth. These illustrations from Stevens are worthy of remembrance, as indicating the sallies that abounded when Hibbard, and, indeed, many other early itinerants were about. In Conference his name was called as William Hibbard. He did not respond. "Is that not your name?" asked the bishop. "No, sir," he replied. "What is it, then?" asked the bishop. "It is Billy Hibbard." "Why," said the bishop, "that is a little boy's name." "I was a very little boy when my father gave it to me," replied Hibbard, amid convulsions of laughter in the Conference. When his character was examined, as is done annually at Conference in the case of each preacher, it was objected of Hibbard that he practiced medicine. "Are you a physician, Brother Hibbard?" inquired the bishop. "I am not," he replied; "I simply give advice in critical cases." "What do you mean by that?" asked the bishop. "In critical cases," said Hibbard, "I always advise them to send for a physician!"

Billy Hibbard

These latter characters, sane and successful, wise and winning, were only illustrations of how the itinerancy developed

each man on his own pattern into a strong individuality. In some cases they were no mean scholars; in others, they were acute and strong logicians; in others, they manifested a saintliness entitling them to a place in the calendar of Christendom.

5. It developed statesmen and effective leaders. This has been seen in Bishops Coke and Asbury. It has been noted by a scholarly student of American preaching in the case of Bishop Simpson, as affecting the breadth and sweep of ideas in his preaching. Perhaps Bishop William McKendree is one of our best illustrations of this. Born in Virginia in 1757, he grew in and by the itinerancy until he became a national character.

Bishop McKendree

II. Knights of the Saddlebag.

It is thus seen that the genius of Methodism was expressed in the character and labors of the men whom it enlisted and developed in its service. These early itinerants have been well called Knights of the Saddlebag.

1. Character. History tells of no knighthood more worthy of record. They left their homes to wander forth, they knew not where, to rescue souls from sin, and a new land from the power of darkness. They went without scrip or purse or promise of reward to those who needed them most. They were inspired by the highest, the most chivalric motives. They gave by their great deeds and sublime deaths a sort of epic grandeur to their epoch. Every new generation of Methodists should drink at the fountain of inspiration in their lives. Dr. William V. Kelley says in the *Methodist Review:* "There was tremendous vitality there, something electric, magnetic, magnificent. They were in dead earnest. The momentum of the movement was immense. The men on horseback, the circuit riders, were a conquering cavalry and charged home with power. The saddlebag brigade was a thundering legion, and the lightning of their word slew multitudes. They were knights not of a round table, but of a round or circuit

Men of Heroism and Power

terrible in its exactions and sufferings, its pains and perils and privations, but terrible also in its executions and master strokes of conquest."

Few of these men were trained in schools or colleges, but they were men of brain and brawn, schooled in the trying life of those times that either made them giants or laid them in early graves. Little did many of them know of scholastic dogmas, they were thrown back on Christianity's "primordial truths and forces," which they preached with simplicity, humility, charity, power, and mastery. Nothing did they care for hierarchical pomp or pretensions, but they carried with them a native dignity and appreciation of their high calling that made them gentlemen, decorous everywhere, and filled their services with a reverence and true spirit of worship often lacking amid cathedral walls, windows, and altars.

2. **Service.** The service these men rendered the American Nation can never be fully measured, and ought to be more generally appreciated. They shaped the religious character of the country in those formative years when destiny was fixed. They laid the moral foundations that have underlaid the character of American citizenship and American law and society. They had largely to do with the training of the American conscience that finally arose in its might to overthrow slavery, and before which other evils must disappear. It is not too much to say that they saved the American frontier from infidelity and from sinking into barbarism, and led it into the Christian civilization that is not surpassed on earth to-day.

To the Nation

It is hard to realize in this day of rapid and comfortable travel what it was to be without railroads and canals, or steamers on rivers and lakes. Even the few stage lines did not run in such directions nor at such times as the itinerant needed. Macadam was not yet known, and highways were few and limited to the older settlements or pieces of military road. There was only one means of travel that could be depended on—the faithful horse. To this noble animal the Meth-

odist Episcopal Church and the United States owe an eternal debt of gratitude. The equestrian itinerants were usually well mounted. They came to be excellent judges of the horse, and to love their steeds, and to know how to care for them under many trying conditions. On their long journeys the only means of carrying changes of clothing, books for study and books for sale (for each preacher was an agent of the Book Concern when there were no bookstores), and even the food for days, and sometimes weeks, in the wilderness, was the capacious saddlebag, made of leather and thrown over the saddle and bulging at either end. These became the well-known accompaniment of the itinerant as he started on his lifework, or unexpectedly came out of the forest in some far frontier settlement.

3. Personal mention. Some few of the more prominent among the early itinerants have received notice. We have space to mention only a few additional pioneers.

(a) Richard Whatcoat. This saint of those early days, the third man elected bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, was born in England and became a Methodist in the times of persecution there. He preached in England, Ireland, and Wales, enduring such severe hardships that his life was despaired of. But he rallied in health and was sent by Wesley with Coke, to help organize the Methodist Episcopal Church. He traveled through Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, South Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, and Kentucky before he was elected bishop, preaching "almost daily, sometimes twice a day," with overwhelming unction, and baptizing more than seventy-five within twenty-four hours. At one time, in fifteen months, he rode on horseback six thousand miles, supplying the sacraments and preaching continually. After his election as bishop he made six Episcopal tours from the heart of Maine to Georgia, and from the Atlantic to the wilderness of Kentucky. "His holy manner of life and his rich Christian experience were as ointment poured forth." "Made perfect through sufferings," "as

he lived so he died." He was buried under the altar of Wesley Chapel, Dover.

(b) William Beauchamp. Entering the ministry in 1793, Beauchamp preached from Nantucket to Chillicothe, Ohio, where he edited the *Western Christian Monitor* in 1815, the only periodical publication in the Church at the time. He was called the "Demosthenes of the West."

(c) Elijah Hedding. Hedding began traveling in 1799, over "bad roads, through wintry storms and forests bound in ice, spending sleepless nights in cabins through which the rain dropped and winds whistled, but journeying three hundred miles a month and preaching once, and often twice, daily, besides attending classes and prayer meetings. His Irish colleague would meet him with the greeting, "Drive on! drive on! brother; let us drive the devil out of the land!"

(d) Robert R. Roberts. This early leader was known as the "Log-cabin Bishop," for he lived and died in a log cabin, from which he made his episcopal tours. He joined the Church wearing a "broad-brimmed, low-crowned, white wool hat, the hunting shirt of tow linen, buckskin breeches, and moccasin shoes." In one year in his early ministry he had both measles and smallpox, and lost two horses; but he made such a success of his work that in sixteen years he was elected bishop, and traveled all over the West and South, riding on horseback mostly, six or seven thousand miles in the last year of his life.

(e) Others of whom the world was not worthy. Space forbids more than mention here of Peter Cartwright (1804), fifty years a presiding elder; of Samuel Parker (1805), called the Cicero of the Western ministry; James Axley (1805), a perfect child of nature, a genius without education, proverbial for his opposition to slavery and whisky. How can we pass by William Capers (1808), James B. Finley (1809), Beverly Waugh (1809), John Emory (1810), Russell Bigelow (1814), Wilbur Fiske (1818), Edward Taylor (1819), and John P. Durbin (1820)? All

Other Knights

were heroes, each on his own pattern. All knew the hardships and successes of the Knights of the Saddlebags; albeit, the names of Emory, Fiske, and Durbin introduce us to a sphere wherein the knight becomes the scholar.

Lesson Outline:

I. The Itinerancy.

1. It made men do quickly what they had to do.
2. It developed heroes.
3. It made them preaching-revivalists.
4. It developed original characters.
5. It developed statesmen and effective leaders.

II. Knights of the Saddlebags.

1. Character.
2. Service.
3. Personal mention.

Bibliography:

Bangs, "History of Methodism."
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Topics for Special Study:

1. The relation of the itinerancy to the success of Methodism.
2. The influence of the itinerancy in forming the religious, moral, and Christian character of the United States.

Topics for Class Discussion:

1. What is meant by "the itinerancy?"
2. What was its first effect on the Methodist ministry?
3. What was its effect on the character of the men in the ranks?
4. How did the itinerancy improve preaching?

5. How did it encourage revivalism?
6. What were some of its other effects?
7. Describe the character and labors of the early Methodist itinerants.
8. In what way did they serve the Nation?
9. Name and tell of the careers of some of the early leaders mentioned in this chapter.

CHAPTER X

LEARNING AND EDUCATION

Some words written by Bishop W. F. McDowell as a part of the Foreword to the first issue of the *Christian Student* are a notable expression of the attitude of Methodism to Christian Learning. He says: "The spirit of Oxford is no more dead in the Church than is the spirit of Fetter Lane. If the Methodists were making a coat of arms for themselves, they would put on it both a book and an altar, a college and a chapel, the classic lamp and the symbol of the cloven tongues like as of fire. The Church remembers that early group of scholars with their devotion to scholarship and their holy use of it. The real Methodism which has shown such transcendant power was mighty in its completeness; it never tied one hand nor substituted one good thing for another. Culture is good, it said, but not good alone. Consecration is good also, but not good alone—Methodism believes in education with Him in the center as Ideal Person and Chief Teacher."

Methodism and Learning

We may in this chapter, for convenience, use the terms learning and education in different senses and say that learning has special reference to the individual acquirement of scholastic as distinct from other knowledge. One who has such acquirements in large measure is a learned man. Education may be used in a more general sense of the discipline that comes from training through a prescribed or customary course of study in the college or university.

I. Learning

With this distinction in mind, we may say that the founders of Methodism were educated in Oxford, and that John Wesley was both an educated man and a learned man. He favored both learning and education. His zeal for knowledge and his intense desire that his followers should be intelligent and well-informed is shown by his constant activity in writing and publishing. "From *A Collection of Forms of Prayer* in 1733 to *The Arminian Magazine* for 1791, his publications, original, edited, or unabridged, were unceasing. In the latest and most accurate list, 371 such publications are named. . . . The character of these publications varies widely, from *A Christian Library,* in fifty volumes, and *The Arminian Magazine,* in fourteen volumes, to tracts addressed to smugglers, swearers, drunkards, and bribe-takers. They include prose and poetry in English and Latin. Among them are sermons, letters, biographies, devotional manuals, polemical pamphlets; grammars of the English, French, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew languages; treatises on logic, medicine, literary criticism, theology, philosophy, and public affairs; histories of Rome, England, and the Christian Church; a comprehensive, thorough, concise system of natural philosophy; commentaries on the entire Scriptures; and the *Complete English Dictionary.*" His emphasis upon learning is well shown in his Address to the Clergy. After speaking of various subjects, a knowledge of which he considers of importance to a minister, he says: "If I am wanting even in these lowest endowments, shall I not frequently regret the want? How often shall I move heavily and be far less careful than I might have been? . . . How poorly must I many times drag on, for want of the helps which I have vilely cast away! . . . However, have I used all possible diligence to supply that grievous defect (so far as it can be supplied now), by the most accurate knowledge of the English Scriptures? . . . Otherwise how can I attempt to instruct others therein?

Without this I am a blind guide indeed! I am absolutely incapable of teaching my flock what I have never learned myself; no more fit to lead souls to God than I am to govern the world."

Again, Wesley claims that faithful work as preachers and pastors does not preclude learning, and asks: "Why are we not more knowing? We must cure this evil, or give up the whole work." "How?" "Steadily spend all the morning, or at least five hours in twenty-four, in this employment. Contract a taste for reading by use, or return to your trades," he urged all his preachers.

Many of the preachers of the first century of the Methodist movement did not have the opportunity of either a college or theological education. But they were urged by Wesley, and by the leaders who became his successors, to be learners. The intensely practical, evangelistic, and itinerant lives of the Methodist preachers made it difficult for them to obey Wesley's injunction, and many of them who were eminently successful in their day and generation did not become learned. There were some, however, who did attain to such acquirements of knowledge that they were justly esteemed for their learning, and may be fairly called learned men.

1. **English Examples.** Thomas Walsh, a young Irish-Catholic, was converted in 1749 in Limerick, Ireland, and soon became a preacher. Besides his native Irish, he mastered English, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. He could preach in the rude but touching Irish tongue. He could reason with Hebrews out of their own Scriptures, and so move the English by the glow and fervor of his speech that many were his converts. Wesley says that he was so thoroughly acquainted with the Bible that if asked of any word in Hebrew or Greek, after a brief pause he could tell how often it occurred in the Bible, and its meaning in every place. Surely he may be called learned.

Walsh

Richard Watson, born in 1781, not only mastered the classics, but acquired a comprehensive knowledge of literature and

the sciences of the day. Seldom has a more profound, a more learned, a more philosophical mind grappled with the great problems of revealed religion than when Watson wrought out his "Theological Institutes," the text-book of more than a generation of Methodist ministers.

Watson

Adam Clarke, in his Commentary, by its very superabundant erudition, displayed an astonishingly various and equally accurate, if not always profound, learning. These among the earlier Methodists in England were the precursors of many learned ministers in the years that followed.

Clarke

2. American Examples. We have record of how Asbury, as he rode through swamps and forests, "improved himself" in the Hebrew tones and points," and his example was followed by many itinerants. Some of them thus became really learned. John Dickens, who had studied at Eton, became a great scholar in English, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew and mathematics. Freeborn Garrettson, no mean scholar himself, said William Gill "might be accounted a learned man." Of Ezekiel Cooper it is said, "he was considered a living encyclopedia," "and his large and accurate information was only surpassed by the range and soundness of his judgment." Martin Ruter's self-culture was a remarkable example of the acquisition of knowledge under difficulties, for with the hardships of the itinerancy he became a learned man and an educator and writer of great value to the Church. Charles Elliott, born in Ireland, 1792, and refused admission to the Dublin University on account of the theological tests, came to the United States in 1814, and became one of the most learned men in the Church, an editor, author, professor, and college president. These are but a few examples of the many who, perhaps in less degree, but in good measure, became learned especially in the Bible and theology. Methodism has always put emphasis on reading, study, and learning.

Asbury and Others

II. Education

If we turn to education in the sense of training by schools, we will find that Methodism always has been energetic in behalf of institutions for education, and that to-day the schools and colleges of the Methodist Episcopal Church are equal to any others in the work they are doing.

1. **In England.** It was not simply because the Wesleys and Whitefield were educated in Oxford that they, and Methodists generally, were interested in education. The new and spiritual life of the Methodist revival had a stimulating effect on the mental natures of the converts and created a demand for schools. This has been true through all Methodist history, and is true to-day. This new mental hunger has not always been met by corresponding opportunities, but attempts have been made to meet it from the very beginning. This is illustrated by the action of the colliers of Kingswood as early as 1739, when the new converts offered subscriptions for a school, the corner-stone of which was laid at once by the impulsive Whitefield, though he soon afterward turned the school over to Wesley.

Spiritual Life and Education

At the first General Conference in England, in 1774, it was asked, "Can we have a seminary for laborers?" Though they could not answer in the affirmative then, the question was repeated, and the idea, as Stevens says, "never abandoned" till answered by the founding of theological institutions in both England and America.

Lady Huntingdon, in the early years of the Methodist movement, took a romantic and dilapidated castle at Trevecca and turned it into a college for the preparation of clergymen. John Fletcher became its president, and at a later date Joseph Benson, the Wesleyan commentator, was its head master. These early institutions have developed into a splendid system of schools, with a normal school at Westminster, and two colleges for the training of ministers.

Trevecca

2. **In America.** Here also the impulse from the new

spiritual life was strong. It broke out early and continuously. In 1790, four years before the Church was formed, when Asbury met John Dickens in the South, the latter framed a subscription for a seminary, and rare has been the day when the subscription for some educational institution has not been in circulation. In the Christmas Conference that organized the Methodist Episcopal Church, Saturday, January 1, 1785, was spent on the project of Abingdon College, afterward called Cokesbury. It was soon erected and acquired "an extensive fame." In ten years it burned. An attempt was made to substitute an academy in Baltimore for Cokesbury, but this, with the Light Street Church, was burned one year later, December 4, 1796.

Cokesbury

On March 9, 1789, the Conference in Georgia agreed to build a college in that State. Friends agreed to purchase 2,000 acres of good land for it, and a congregation pledged 12,500 pounds of tobacco. They proposed to call it Wesley College. In May, 1789, the first Kentucky Conference "fixed a plan" for a school and called it Bethel. A fine building for its day was erected, but the debt on it dragged the noble mind of Poythress into insanity.

Wesley

It is likely that these attempts were discouraging to the Methodists in the latter part of the century, when Methodism itself seemed to lose ground for a little while. And it may be that out of this, as well as the other fact that there was much of infidelity in some schools in those days, grew that opposition to schools in some circles that has marred the history of our Church.

But the great revival and the new life of the early years of the nineteenth century again awakened the mental hunger of the people, and the desire on the part of the Church to meet it. An academy was started at New Market, New Hampshire, in 1817, that was removed to Wilbraham, Massachusetts, in 1824-25, and is still doing good work. Many other academies were established in the years following, as it became the policy

Wilbraham and Academies

to have an institution of this grade within the bounds of each Annual Conference. Some of these ceased to work and live as the public school system developed its high schools so as to prepare students for college. Many, however, live on in spite of changed conditions.

As years have gone on many colleges have been founded, some of which have grown into great institutions with hundreds of students, which continue to pour a rich intellectual and spiritual life into innumerable widely-scattered communities. Some of the strongest of these are: Northwestern University, Evanston, Ill. (1855); DePauw University, Greencastle, Ind. (1837); Ohio Wesleyan University, Delaware, O. (1842); Boston University, (1869); Syracuse University, (1870); University of Denver, (1880).

We have noted that the General Conference of 1816 ordered a Course of Study for the candidates for the ministry. This has been of great benefit to the members of the Conferences where it has been faithfully used. But by 1839 the conviction that better and special ministerial education was necessary became so strong that a convention was called in Boston to plan for a theological school. An institution was proposed that only secured a theoretical existence in connection with Wesleyan University. It was actually opened as a "Biblical Institute" in Newbury, Vermont, in 1847; and again moved to Boston in 1867, taking the title of "The Boston Theological Seminary." In 1871, on the founding of Boston University, it became a department of this new institution, and is known as the School of Theology of Boston University, and is now, with one or two possible exceptions, the largest theological school in America.

Theological Schools

Boston

The patriarch of the above school was John Dempster, who became theological professor in 1845. Later he was among the founders of "The Garrett Biblical Institute" at Evanston, Illinois, which was opened in 1854, and is to-day one of the strong institutions of the Church.

Garrett

Drew

In 1866 a foundation was provided for the "Drew Theological Seminary," at Madison, New Jersey. Still other schools have been organized for the training of ministers and other Christian workers.

The professors in the theological schools are nominated by, or approved by, the Board of Bishops, and thus their loyalty to the Church is assured. The other institutions known as Methodist schools, while permeated with the high and moral religious atmosphere for which the Methodist Episcopal Church has stood, are not in any sense sectarian. They seek to give their students the highest possible mental culture permeated with a true religious faith and spiritual life. The Methodist Year Book of 1910 gives a table of these institutions that is a simply wonderful showing when it is remembered that it is not a hundred years since the first permanent venture was made in this field.

III. Total Statistics

From this table we take the following totals: Colleges and universities now number 53, with 39,175 students. Seminaries, or schools in the country below college grade, 57, with 12,334 students. The mission schools, 42, with 4,892 students. Theological schools, 10, with 882 students. These make a total of 120 educational institutions, with 52,391 students—a promise of trained men and women consecrated to Christian activity in the coming generations that should make all Christian hearts rejoice.

Lesson Outline:

I. Learning.
   1. English examples.
   2. American examples.
II. Education.
   1. In England.
   2. In America.
III. Total Statistics.

Bibliography:

The Methodist Year Book, 1910.

Topics for Special Study:

1. The necessity for Church schools.
2. Relations of the Church to education.

Topics for Class Discussion:

1. Distinguish between learning and education.
2. What was the relation of the early Methodists to learning.
3. Name some examples of learned men among the early Methodist preachers.
4. What efforts were made in England toward providing Methodist schools?
5. Give some concrete examples of early Methodist zeal for education in America.
6. Give particulars concerning the founding of Methodist theological seminaries.
7. Quote statistics evidencing the educational strength of present-day Methodism.

CHAPTER XI

MISSIONARY SPIRIT AND ACTIVITY

The Missionary Spirit

Christianity is a missionary religion. Its spirit breathes in the Master's great commission, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel."

1. In John Wesley and Methodism. John Wesley went as a missionary to Georgia in 1735. Later he declared, "The world is my parish." This sounds as if to him all missions were home missions. But this only affects the form and method of work. The zealous spirit of propagandism that has made Methodism the largest body of evangelical Christians on earth has really been missionary. Its early passion for the salvation of men could not be confined to England. It was soon felt in Wales, Scotland, and Ireland. In 1760 Gilbert was a missionary to the West Indies. In 1765 Coughlan was preaching in Nova Scotia, and Black was soon organizing societies there. In 1766 the Methodist passion for the salvation of men crossed from Ireland to America and sent Embury and Strawbridge to preaching. In 1769 Pilmoor and Boardman were sent by John Wesley as missionaries to America. Asbury and Wright, Rankin and Shadford were also missionaries to establish Methodism in this country.

Methodist Propagandism Really Missionary

Missionaries to America

2. In Coke and the Wesleyans. Thomas Coke was called the "foreign minister of Methodism." He was an incarnation of foreign missionary spirit. He spent his ample fortune and life in mission work in the United States, the West Indies, Ireland, and Africa, and died on his way to India, which he had long dreamed of conquering for his Master.

There were few missionary societies before the nineteenth century. The earlier were "The English Society for the Propagation of the Gospel" and "The Moravian Missionary Society." "The Baptist Missionary Society" was founded by William Carey in 1792; "The London Missionary Society," in 1795, and "The Netherlands Missionary Society," in 1797. The nineteenth century is the epoch of organized missionary work. It is suggestive that it took its form, as the spiritual revival under the name of Methodism was extending its influence among other Christian Churches.

Other Societies

On the death of Coke the Wesleyans began to organize societies, and in 1816 the Wesleyan Conference formed a society for the whole Church, and the gifts have grown and the work extended to many parts of the earth. Meanwhile other Methodist bodies in England have also been sending out missionaries.

II. Home Missions in American Methodism

Methodism in America was itself a mission for many years. It was so preoccupied in caring for the rapidly extending and increasing population at home that it could hardly lift its eyes to foreign lands.

1. General.

(a) To the Indians. Like a romance reads the story of John Stewart, a man with both Negro and Indian blood in his veins, who was converted in Marietta, Ohio, in 1816. He soon felt that he heard a voice urging him to go to the Northwest to preach the gospel. He started with a knapsack on his back, and a great joy in his heart, to go whither he knew not. By roads and trails and through heavy, virgin forests he found his way to the Upper Sandusky, where dwelt the Wyandot Indians. Here the voice rested as did the star over Bethlehem. Finding an escaped slave who was a backslidden Methodist, he used

John Stewart

him as an interpreter. Soon there were converts among the sons of the forest, a number of chiefs being among the number.

The story of Stewart's mission and success spread like wildfire. The Trimbles, in Ohio; Disosway, in New York, True, in Boston, and then Bangs, Clark, and others in New York were inspired to do something in an organized way. Local missionary societies were springing up, and an organization of a more general character was formed in New York on April 5, 1819. The General Conference of 1820 adopted the plan and made the missionary work that of the whole Church. There was really no distinction as to home and foreign missionary work at first. It was missionary, but it was at home; i. e., it was within the United States.

The Missionary Society in 1819

The work among the Indians was continued. James B. Finley was sent as a missionary to the Wyandots, and the work spread among other tribes. The romantic story of the four Flathead Indians journeying from what is now the State of Washington to St. Louis in 1832 to ask for the gospel, appealed mightily to many Christian hearts. And surely the red man, driven from his ancestral home ever further and further West, and cursed by the white man's vices, deserved and deserves this one good—the gospel of Jesus Christ.

(b) To the Negroes. Much work was done for these people while in slavery. Whitefield refers to them. Asbury often preached to them. A noted character in early Methodism was "Black Harry." Asbury refers to him in 1780, "as a suitable traveling companion to preach to the colored people." He traveled as a "driver" with Coke, Asbury, and Garrettson, and was a more popular preacher than any of them. Coke said, "I really believe that he is one of the best preachers in the world."

"Black Harry"

These poor people were very accessible, and had they been at liberty to attend Church and give themselves to religious work, might soon have been Christianized. Many planters were favorable to the work among slaves, but many

others were opposed to it and persecuted those who attempted it. In 1829 the South Carolina Conference established two missions to the blacks. In 1832 James O. Andrew (later a bishop) made an impassioned appeal for this work among the slaves. After the separation, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, continued to do much for them, and after the war, when all Negroes were free, in 1870 organized its colored members into a separate Church (the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church), which now has 2,727 ministers and 224,700 members. The Methodist Episcopal Church was not able to do much until after the war, when it entered heroically this field, and has at present twenty Conferences, with 296,783 members. There are other bodies of Methodists among the Negroes that number nearly 1,500,000; so that it is cause for rejoicing that there are at least two million Methodists among the Negroes.

Two Million Negro Methodists

(c) To the Germans. Evangelical Germans have always been closely associated with the history of Methodism. The Moravians had much influence in the religious life of both John and Charles Wesley. Otterbein assisted in the ordination of Asbury. In 1870 Abbott had preached among them, and large results attended his ministry. In 1790 Jacob Albright, who had been converted under the elder Boehm, became a Methodist local preacher. In 1796 he began to itinerate among the Germans. In 1809, after his death, his converts took the name of "Albrights," but later became the "Evangelical Association," which has a membership of 133,313. Many other Germans were gathered into the Methodist Episcopal Church in those early years.

Albright

On January 17, 1835, William Nast was converted. He had been a student under Baur, and a classmate of Strauss in Germany, but after terrific struggles with doubt, he came into a joy unspeakable and full of glory, and became the "father of German Methodism." There are now eight Conferences of these devoted Methodists in the United States.

William Nast

(d) To the Scandinavians. These hardy sons of the sea and the Northland were coming to America as sailors and settlers, when, in 1845, Olaf Gustav Hedstrom was set to work as a missionary in the port of New York. In his Bethel, Germans, Belgians, Swedes, Finns, and Norwegians would bow at the same altar seeking Jesus as their Savior. Some sailed away to other ports, but some went West to settle and plant Methodism in colonies of their own tongue, and now there are six Conferences of these loyal Methodists.

(e) To other peoples. The first missionary sent out by the society, in 1820, was Ebenezer Brown, to the French of Louisiana. A Welsh mission was established in 1828. Spanish, Italians, Portuguese, Bohemians, Hungarians, Greeks, and others flocking to our shores are now met with the gospel message, while our new Territories, Alaska, Hawaii, and Porto Rico, are hearing the good news.

Church of all Nations

(f) The cities. The wonderful growth of American cities, the rapid shifting of populations, and the incoming millions of foreigners made necessary special efforts to meet new conditions. City missionary societies sprang up that were organized into "The National City Evangelization Union." Horace Benton, who was its father, has just died. Frank Mason North has been its inspiring soul, and great is the good done in all our chief cities.

City Evangelization Union

2. The Woman's Home Missionary Society. This was organized in 1882, and has more than one hundred missionaries and three hundred deaconesses at work in blessed ministry among the women and children of the Indians, Negroes, Mormons, the submerged of the cities, and the foreign populations whose homes and lives need the helpful touch of Christian womanhood. Its deaconess work has had a wonderful growth, and its hospitals, homes, schools, orphanages, and other institutions dot nearly every State and city of the Union.

Deaconesses

3. The Board of Home Missions and Church Extension. The missionary work of the Church, both home and foreign, was under one society until 1907, the funds collected not being quite equally divided between them. After much discussion, a separation was made in 1908, Home Missions being consolidated with Church Extension, under the title, the Board of Home Missions and Church Extension. For a number of years the Church Extension Society had had a separate existence and had accomplished a magnificent work in church building. It was organized in 1865.

The motto of the new Board is, "America for Christ." This is the watchword of a holy war, the battlecry of a new crusade. It faces the million people coming annually to our shores by immigration, and the babbling millions of all tongues that fill our cities. "God is giving the nations to America that America may give the gospel to the nations." The mission of this Board is to save America that America may save the world. The Board received and expended more than a million dollars last year. Its help and inspiration were felt throughout all the Conferences of the home Church.

III. Foreign Missions in American Methodism

1. General.

(a) Africa. This work began with the appointment of Melville B. Cox to Liberia in 1832. We can not dwell on the tragic story of efforts to colonize returned slaves on the coast of Africa, nor the founding in mid-ocean of a Methodist Church by Rev. Daniel Coker, that was landed at Sherbro, removed to Sierra Leone, and finally located at Monrovia. The going of Cox by appointment of the bishops was the real beginning. His enthusiasm that cried, "Let a thousand fall before Africa be given up," and his death in Africa in 1833, bound that mission to the heart of the Church. Through reverses and successes under Seys, Burns, and Roberts, it has continued to this day. It seemed likely to take on new life under the heroic leadership

M. B. Cox

of Bishop William Taylor, but his plans proved to be not adapted to the conditions. Bishop Joseph C. Hartzell has left Liberia largely to the care of Bishop Scott, and with wise statemanship has planted missions in the Madeira Islands; in Angola, on the West Coast; in Portuguese East Africa and in Rhodesia, in the East; and among the Mohammedans on the North Coast. The Africa Diamond Jubilee of 1909-10 was opened by a speech by President Roosevelt, and closed by an address by President Taft, and resulted in raising $300,000. To-day missions well-nigh girdle the continent and are already piercing its heart.

(b) South America. In 1835, Rev. F. E. Pitts was sent to Buenos Ayres. Limited at first by conditions to English-speaking residents, this work has been perpetuated by Dempster, Norris, Lore, Goodfellow, and McLaughlin. Conditions at last allowing work among the Spaniards, Dr. C. W. Drees, trained by work and superintendence in Mexico, was made superintendent, and missions are planted in Argentina, Peru, Ecuador, Paraguay, Chile, Bolivia, and Panama, that promise great growth among these Romanists.

(c) China. In 1847 two missionaries were appointed to and soon reached that populous empire. It was ten years before the first baptism of a Chinaman occurred. But the mighty faith and persistent work of such heroes as Collins, Wiley, Maclay, Sites, Plumb, Pilcher, and others as worthy have gathered nearly twenty thousand members and half as many probationers; strategic cities have been occupied; educational and philanthropic institutions have been planted; native workers have been raised up, who under inspiring leadership are ready to lead enlarged forces to the salvation of China's awakening millions.

(d) Germany. The conversion of William Nast and the work among the Germans in America has been related. Happy converts wrote to the Fatherland of their experiences, and every letter was a missionary epistle. In 1844, William Nast was sent to see if a mission could be founded in the land

of rationalism, where the life and power of religion were at low ebb. The time did not seem propitious, but many changes led to the appointment of L. S. Jacoby in 1848. Difficulties and persecutions were met, but gradually success was won. The names of Doering, Nippert, Nuelsen, Warren (of Boston University), Hurst (later of Drew, and still later bishop), were built into German Methodism. Its two Conferences of nearly 20,000 members, 650 preachers, and 440 deaconesses, with various institutions, are well organized and are making their life and spirit felt. It spread into Switzerland in 1856, and there are nearly ten thousand members in this mountain land of liberty.

(e) Scandinavia. Conversions could not occur among these people in America without the story going back home. Rev. O. P. Peterson went home on a visit and had a revival, and in 1853 he was sent as a missionary to Norway. About the same time John P. Larsson was carried to Sweden and led in a revival that resulted in Methodism entering that country. About 1857 it entered Denmark also, and to-day Scandinavia is honeycombed by a live, happy, aggressive, native Methodism, that has begun work in Finland and St. Petersburg.

(f) India. The story of the mission in India, begun in 1856 under William Butler, could not be told in a volume. The lives and work of William Butler, Bishops Taylor, Thoburn, and Parker, with many more who have not counted their lives dear unto themselves if only they might win India's millions of many tongues and religions to Jesus Christ, would make a library of lives of saints. Seven Conferences, including Malaysia and the Philippines, make this the great mission of Methodism. Its sixty thousand members, one hundred thousand probationers, strong force of workers and institutions, led on by Bishops Warne, Robinson, and Oldham, promise the fulfillment of Coke's dream that India shall be conquered for Christ.

(g) Bulgaria. In 1857 a mission was begun in Bulgaria. Difficulties and discouragements have prevented great growth.

The continued existence of the mission illustrates the "perseverance of the saints" in our Church authorities, in the workers sent out, and especially in the native Christians. There are now about five hundred members and one hundred probationers, and it is hoped a brighter day is dawning.

(h) Italy. After long agitation by Dr. Elliott, who in ministers' meetings would picture "the pope on his knees at the mourner's bench crying for mercy, and afterward telling his experience in a Methodist class-meeting," in 1871 Dr. L. M. Vernon was sent as missionary to the land of the pope. He has not been converted yet, but there is hope. To arouse one's anger is often the first step to conversion. After long and vexing delays, much opposition, and many changes in workers, there are three thousand members, with a fine building in the heart of Rome, and churches and schools enough to arouse the Vatican's ire and the world's attention.

(i) Mexico. Our next-door neighbor was threatened in 1857 by the pope, France, and Austria, with having Romanism fastened upon it forever. Grant and Seward made Napoleon withdraw his troops and Austria keep hers at home. Maximilian was defeated and executed, and in the new day of liberty Protestantism was allowed to enter. In 1872 Bishop Simpson sent Dr. William Butler, whom we have met as the founder of missions in India. He met Bishop Haven in Mexico, and with great wisdom and tact, fine properties were puchased. In May, 1874, Charles W. Drees and John W. Butler, just out of Boston University School of Theology, arrived and gave new impulse to the work. Siberts, Craver, Barker, Salmans, and others, amid dangers and difficulties, have gathered three thousand members and a goodly company of workers, with churches, schools, a press, and other facilities.

(j) Japan. In 1872, Dr. Maclay, whose name we met in connection with the mission to China, was appointed with others to begin work in Japan. The mission was organized

in Yokohama on August 8, 1873. In spite of grave difficulties, the Satsuma rebellion, and the great cholera scourges, the mission grew steadily alongside of the work of the Methodist Church of Canada and that of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, until these all combined in the Methodist Church of Japan in 1907. There are nearly fifteen thousand members in this native Church, at the head of which is Bishop Yoitsu Honda.

(k) Korea. A good Providence opened the way for a mission in Korea in 1885. The changes wrought by the Russo-Japanese war, and later in the Government, have depressed the Koreans, but have seemed to open a new day religiously. A wonderful revival has been sweeping over the country and is still in progress. Thousands are entering into a vivid religious experience and are joining the Churches. There are, at last reports, forty thousand Methodists in what recently was the "Hermit Nation." It is predicted that in ten or fifteen years there will be a million Christians in Korea. Bishop M. C. Harris is leading the Methodist host.

We regret that space forbids our saying more than that other Methodist Churches are doing good work in various mission fields.

2. The Woman's Foreign Missionary Society. We can only call attention to the splendid work of this noble society, organized in 1870, with now 135 workers in mission fields, without whose assistance and support, hospitals, homes, schools, and even missions, could not be maintained.

3. The Board of Foreign Missions. This benevolent Board, organized January 1, 1907, is the successor of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church. By the separation of the home missionary work of the Church, the separate and distinct administration of the foreign missionary interests became the sole charge of this new Board of Foreign Missions.

The Methodist forces are now well arranged for the conquest of the world. Bishop Fowler, referring to the Orient,

said: "It is not a little door that is open; half the world has fallen out, and all Christendom may march in. The whole world is open now." And the missionary spirit is rising in all the Churches. The Student Volunteer Movement in colleges and schools of theology; the Laymen's Movement that by its contagious enthusiasm is stirring the Church to larger giving, and the cry, "The world for Christ in this generation," mean a new crusade that will make Jesus Christ the Ruler of the nations.

The Missionary Outlook

Lesson Outline:

I. The Missionary Spirit.
   1. In John Wesley and Methodism.
   2. In Coke and the Wesleyans.

II. Home Missions in American Methodism.
   1. General.
   2. The Womans' Home Missionary Society.
   3. The Board of Home Missions and Church Extension.

III. Foreign Missions in American Methodism.
   1. General.
   2. The Woman's Foreign Missionary Society.
   3. The Board of Foreign Missions.

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The Annual Reports of the Societies.

Topics for Special Study:

1. The general history of Christian missions.
2. The need for Methodist missions in Protestant countries.

Topics for Class Discussion:

1. What are the evidences of missionary spirit in early Methodism?
2. When were the first missionary societies organized?
3. What led the way to the organization of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church?
4. Tell of missionary work among the Negro people.
5. Name the different nationalities among whom Methodist missions have been founded.
6. What is the Board of Home Missions and Church Extension?
7. What has been accomplished in Africa? In China? In India? In various European countries? In Japan and Korea?
8. Tell of the work of the Woman's Home Missionary Society. Of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society.
9. What is the Board of Foreign Missions?
10. What is the promise for the future of Protestant missionary endeavor?

CHAPTER XII

CHURCH BOARDS AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Early in the last century the activities of the Methodist Episcopal Church began to be so diversified that special agencies were developed to carry on the different lines of work.

Rise of Church Societies

We have seen that the Missionary Society was organized in 1819 to carry on missionary work, both at home and abroad. Some years later the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, and still later the Woman's Home Missionary Society and various other organizations came into existence to meet definite needs and accomplish definite tasks. The elasticity of Methodist polity is seen in the way different societies have arisen to accomplish various definite tasks, have been fitted into the Church machinery, like wheels within wheels, and made to constitute a complete organization of amazing efficiency.

I. The Board of Sunday Schools

1. **Sunday-schools in Methodism.** Sunday-schools and the Methodist movement have always been closely associated. Mrs. Bradburn, the wife of one of Wesley's helpers, is said

Raikes and Wesley

to have suggested the idea of the Sunday-school to Robert Raikes. John Wesley was the first public man to approve the idea in England. He wrote in 1784: "Perhaps God may have a deeper end thereto than men are aware of. Who knows but what some of these schools may become nurseries for Christians." Lecky, the historian, said of the Wesleyan Movement, "The Methodists appear to have preached especially to children." Methodism has always urged the religious instruction and training of children.

One of the earliest Sunday-schools in America was organized under the direction of Bishop Asbury at the house of Thomas Crenshaw, in Hanover County, Virginia, in 1786. The Christmas Conference of 1784 had required of Methodist preachers that "where there are ten children whose parents are in society (they should) meet them at least an hour every week." In 1787 it was ordered that the children of each congregation should be formed into classes. The Methodist Conference in Charleston, South Carolina, adopted a resolution in February, 1890, in favor of organizing Sunday-schools. The Minutes say, "Let us labor, as the heart and soul of one man, to establish Sunday-schools in or near the place of public worship." This is thought to be the first recognition of Sunday-schools by any Church. It is likely that the growth of these schools into permanence was slow. The scholars were dependent on the Bible and Catechism as text-books for a good many years, though the rudiments of English were taught in some of them.

First Sunday-school in America

2. The Sunday-school Union. It was not until 1827 that the Sunday-school Union of the Methodist Episcopal Church was organized to "encourage the formation of schools in small towns and scattered settlements, and to furnish them books suitable for libraries, and communications containing instructions for teachers." Stevens says, "Never did an institution go into operation under more favorable circumstances or was hailed with more universal joy than the Sunday-school Union of the Methodist Episcopal Church." Bangs says that by an "injudicious attempt to amalgamate the Bible, Tract, and Sunday-school Societies, the Sunday-school Union declined, if indeed it did not become defunct." It was resuscitated by the zeal of some friends in New York, and by the action of the General Conference of 1840, that gave the Sunday-school work a new impulse throughout the whole Church. Daniel Wise was made editor of the *Sunday-school Advocate* in 1856. The first issue of Vincent's "Sunday-school

Teacher," in 1866, contained the first of a newly conceived series of lessons entitled, "Two Years With Jesus—A New System of Sunday-school Study." "The Vincent system was the first in the world with analytical and illustrative helps for the teacher and lesson helps for the scholar." At the General Conference of 1868, Daniel Wise was retained as editor of the *Sunday-school Advocate* and library books, and John H. Vincent was elected editor of the *Sunday-school Journal* and books of instruction. The Sunday-school, under the leadership of Kidder and Wise, had grown into colossal proportions with nearly a million scholars, and nineteen thousand converts therefrom had been reported in the year 1868. It was fitting that the new master of Sunday-school Lessons should be put at the head of this host. His inspiring touch was soon felt everywhere. In 1872 John H. Vincent's lesson idea and B. F. Jacobs's world-wide plan of uniformity were combined and actualized in the International Uniform Series of Sunday-school Lessons. Vincent was made chairman of the first International Lesson Committee, and was continued in that position until his resignation in 1896.

The Uniform Lesson System

To Bishop Vincent also largely belongs the credit for inaugurating what is now known as teacher-training. In 1857 he organized a normal class in his Church in Joliet, Illinois. This aroused more than local interest. In 1860 he presented a plan to the Rock River Conference for a "permanent Sunday-school institute for the training of teachers." The first of these institutes was held at Freeport, Illinois, in 1861. Of the growth of this movement Bishop Vincent himself says: "For many years, while in the pastorate and in my special efforts to create a general interest in the training of Sunday-school teachers and officers, I held in all parts of the country institutes and normal classes after the general plan of the secular educators. In this work I had the sympathy and co-operation of Mr. Lewis Miller, of Akron, Ohio, an energetic and aggressive Sunday-school

worker, the head of the famous and admirable Akron Sunday-school, and it was at his suggestion that I consented to take one of my Sunday-school institutes to Chautauqua. I gave it the name of 'assembly' to distinguish it from the ordinary Sunday-school conventions and institutes. It was a new use of the term 'assembly,' and enabled its managers to present to the public a new experiment. The camp-meeting management at Fairpoint, on the shores of Lake Chautauqua, through the influence of the president of the camp-meeting association, Mr. Lewis Miller, of Akron, Ohio, allowed us to use their grounds for two weeks in August, 1874. He, as president, took charge of the business side, and I, as superintendent of instruction, took into my hands the details of the platform and the educational side of the new movement. It proved to be a great success."

3. The Board of Sunday Schools. In spite of the early failure to amalgamate the Sunday-school interests with others, another effort was made in the General Conference of 1904 to combine it with the Board of Education and Freedmen's Aid Society. This also was found to be unwise. In 1908 the Board of Sunday Schools was constituted by the General Conference as the lineal descendent and direct successor of the Sunday-school Union, with headquarters at Chicago. The Rev. David G. Downey was elected corresponding secretary of the new organization. Dr. J. T. McFarland, who had been corresponding secretary the four years previous, was elected editor of the more than a score of Sunday-school publications, the finest series now published in the world.

Its Organization

The work of the Board of Sunday Schools is fairly outlined in the following statement, made by the General Conference of 1908:

"For the moral and religious instruction of our children and for the promotion of Bible knowledge among all our people, there shall be a Board of Sunday Schools, duly incorporated according to the laws of the State of Illinois, and

having its headquarters in the city of Chicago, and the said Board shall have general oversight of all the Sunday-school interests of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and shall be subject to such rules and regulations as the General Conference may from time to time prescribe." "The work of the Board shall be to found Sunday-schools in needy neighborhoods; to contribute to the support of needy Sunday-schools, and to educate the Church in all phases of Sunday-school work."

The Purpose and Aim of the Board

The Board is organized into five departments, under which its work is carried on as follows: Administration, Finance, Education, Extension, Foreign Work. Its aim has been thus stated by the corresponding secretary:

"To maintain Sunday-school missionaries.

"To found new schools in needy places.

"To make grants of literature and money for the development of Sunday-school work at home and in the foreign field.

"To stimulate interest in Bible study throughout the entire Church, and to raise the standard of Sunday-school study and teaching.

"To publish leaflets and literature dealing with methods of work, grading of schools, and the newer ideals and principles in the Sunday-school world.

"To emphasize the spiritual privileges and rights of the child, and to aid in bringing the child to the experience of spiritual consciousness and to the expression of that consciousness in positive love of Christ and practical service to humanity.

"To inspire our youth with noble enthusiasm, generous ideals, chivalric courage, dauntless faith, and the high joy and cheer of the quest for goodness.

"To train up a generation of high-minded, pure-hearted, generous youth who will know and love the Bible, who will be intensely interested in the moral integrity and well-being of the home, State, and the Nation, and who will be abso-

lutely loyal to Christ, the moral Hero and the living Leader and Lord of the race."

The Board places large emphasis upon the importance and need of teacher-training. It is made a principal aim and end of the Educational Department to promote teacher-training in all the schools of the denomination.

There is no more important work in the Church than that represented by this Board. The Sunday-school represents the largest single interest of the Church, its membership being about two per cent more than the total membership of the Church. The official statistics for 1909 show the existence in the Methodist Episcopal Church of 34,783 Sunday-schools, with a total enrollment of 3,482,946. In this vast host is to be found at once the source of the greatest hope and the greatest responsibility of the Church.

II. The Board of Education

The object of this Board is "the promotion of the educational work of the Church." It has two specific lines of work, the aid of educational institutions, and the aid of worthy young people who are seeking an education. The purpose is to secure "a well-equipped force of men and women for the ministerial, missionary, evangelistic, and educational work of the Church." This Board was the result of the Centennial of American Methodism in 1866, and was instituted by the General Conference of 1868. For the purpose of student aid a collection is taken in the Sunday-schools of the Church on Children's Day. The fund has accumulated until it is now nearly $400,000, the interest from which, as well as the proceeds from the collections, is now used to loan to students under careful regulations. Nearly seventeen thousand students have been thus aided in their efforts to secure an education. The Board is coming to have more and more influence in the educational affairs of the Church, and is now engaged in an effort to build up a general fund to assist educational institutions.

Student Aid

III. The Freedmen's Aid Society

At the close of the Civil War it was necessary to look after the care and especially the education of the emancipated freedmen. Up to 1866 the Methodist Episcopal Church had co-operated with other societies in this work. In 1866 the Freedmen's Aid Society was organized, and at once received the hearty support of the people. The General Conference of 1868 "recognized the society, approved its objects, commended it to the liberal support of the people, and recommended the Conferences" to place this cause upon the list of official benevolences. The schools of this society have sent out into lines of usefulness and Christian service two hundred thousand young men and women. The educational work among the whites of the South was in the care of this society for some years, but was transferred to the Board of Education in 1908. Much of the remarkable advance of the liberated Negroes and their descendants is due to the work of this society, that has twenty-five universities, colleges, and seminaries under its fostering care.

Service to the Negro Race

IV. The Board of Conference Claimants

This is one of the youngest of these Boards, authorized by the General Conference of 1908. Joseph B. Hingeley was elected corresponding secretary. The Annual Conferences had been trying to care for their worn-out ministers, widows, and orphans for many years before, through what was known as the "fifth collection" and the collection for "Conference Claimants." But the support given these claimants was pitifully small. The Discipline of 1908 declares "the claim to a comfortable support inheres in the gospel ministry and rightfully inures to the benefit of the preacher in the Methodist Episcopal Church when he is admitted to membership in the Annual Conference. Such preacher may voluntarily relinquish this claim, but it can neither be justly questioned during his active

An Adequate Support for the Superannuate

service nor invalidated by his being superannuated; and at his death it rightfully passes to the dependent members of his family." It is expected that this Board, by the new features in its plan, will care more adequately for these worthy servants of the Church.

V. Other Organizations

1. **The Epworth League.** Organized on May 15, 1889, its purpose is "promoting intelligence and piety among the young people of our Church and congregations, and training them in works of mercy and help." Emphasis is put on the devotional meeting, Bible study, mission study, the Morning Watch, personal evangelism, and Christian stewardship. It has now a membership of over eight hundred thousand in the Methodist Episcopal Church.

2. **The Methodist Brotherhood.** For some years there had been men's societies, clubs, etc., in local Churches here and there. Out of these two more general organizations had grown, the Brotherhood of St. Paul and the Wesley Brotherhood. At a joint convention at Buffalo, New York, on March 11, 1908, these were consolidated into the Methodist Brotherhood, and in May of the same year the General Conference incorporated it into the economy of the Church. It has now over seven hundred Chapters, and has in it the promise and potency of great good.

3. **The Methodist Federation for Social Service** was organized in Washington, D. C., December 3-4, 1907, and was recognized and given semi-official status by the General Conference in 1908.

Lesson Outline:

I. The Board of Sunday Schools.
   1. Sunday-schools in Methodism.
   2. The Sunday-school Union.
   3. The Board of Sunday Schools.

II. The Board of Education.
III. The Freedmen's Aid Society.
IV. The Board of Conference Claimants.
V. Other Organizations.
   1. The Epworth League.
   2. The Methodist Brotherhood.
   3. The Methodist Federation for Social Service.

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Topics for Special Study:

1. The history of the Sunday-school movement.
2. Sunday-schools as a source of Church growth.

Topics for Class Discussion:

1. What is the need for subordinate organizations within the Church?
2. How did Sunday-schools first arise?
3. Discuss the relation of Methodism to early Sunday-schools in America.
4. Give the main facts concerning the Sunday-school Union.
5. Tell of the work of John H. Vincent.
6. State the purpose and aim of the Board of Sunday Schools.
7. What is the work of the Board of Education?
8. State the object of the Freedmen's Aid Society.
9. What is the purpose of the Board of Conference Claimants?

CHAPTER XIII

THE THEOLOGY OF METHODISM

I. Methodism an Expression of Spiritual Life

Methodism was not in the beginning a doctrinal movement. Its chief interest has never been in theology. It has never had a doctrinal schism. It began as a revival. It found men living lives of sin, in the bondage of sinful habits, spiritually dead. To Wesley and Whitefield the way of salvation from this condition was to be found in faith in Jesus Christ. This had brought inner peace to their own hearts. Their labors as evangelists demonstrated abundantly that other men in even worse bondage than they themselves had been might find deliverance in the same way. So with the Bible in their hands and an experience within, they went forth preaching everywhere, the Lord confirming their labors by moral signs and wonders. Thus it is seen that Methodism began as a practical movement for the moral and spiritual regeneration of lost men. It set forth no special tenets, was interested in the promulgation of no distinctive creed. It was interested not in theories about religion, but in religion itself—religion as a power to save men from the bondage to habit, from moral degradation, and from hopelessness and despair. Wesley saw everywhere the forms of religion. Yet the nation was dying from inanition, despair, and vice. What he wanted, believed in, preached, and demanded in his followers was religion manifested in a pure, holy, earnest life of service. There are on record numberless statements made by Wesley which set forth these facts. "I make," he says, "no opinion the term of union with any man. I think

A Practical Movement for the Regeneration of Lost Men

and let think. What I want is holiness of heart and life. They who have this are my brother, sister, and mother." Again he declared: "We do not impose, in order to admission, any opinions whatever. We only ask, Is thy heart right as my heart? If it be, give me thy hand." To a correspondent he writes, "Orthodoxy, or right opinion, is at best a very slender part of religion, if it can be allowed to be any part at all." "Life is more than dogma" is the triumphing and triumphant assertion of Methodism."

A Creed is Necessary and Inevitable

But no religious movement can separate itself from creeds. Credo means simply "I believe." Unless a man believes something, unless indeed he has strong and deep convictions, which he is willing to proclaim fearlessly, he can not be a religious leader. Thus out of the truths preached by the Methodist leaders, truths which found their verification in the everyday life of the new converts, there came to be certain theological statements which were recognized as Methodist belief. Later these came to be regarded as the essential Methodist doctrines. They were found not to be new; they were old truths rediscovered and put forth with all the vitality and freshness of a new life.

Methodist Theology the Systemization of Facts of Experience

This process has been well stated by W. P. McVey in these words: "The doctrines of Methodism were the outgrowth of empirical data; deduced therefrom, or thereby proven if controverted . . . She carefully observed the spiritual facts, collating and clarifying the same with skill. When this was done, tentative formulas were deduced; tradition was discarded, the dominant theologies were put aside; her tenets were to be founded on facts. Not less nobly did she turn to verification; however alluring the proposition, it was first to be tested, and, if found wanting, to be frankly rejected—again and again Wesley said, 'I can not deny the facts;' and often did he plead the fact as the sufficient justification of an idea."

II. Distinctive Doctrines

1. The supremacy of love. Methodism was a rediscovery of the love of God. "The only answer which completely sets forth the meaning of Methodism is that it recovered by experience and set forth in its preaching and teaching the *supremacy of the love of God.* This rediscovery fixed the type of its religion, created its desire for spiritual fellowship and inspired its ceaseless evangelism . . . everywhere (in Wesley's preaching) the emphasis is on the universal love of God which will manifest the fullness of its saving power to every one who will accept it in Christ." (J. S. Lidgett.) The center of the Christian religion, to Wesley, was to be found in the words of Jesus: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second like unto it, is this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments the whole law hangeth, and the prophets." This, so far as man's part is concerned. Back of this, of course, lies the eternal fact of God's fatherly love to His creatures: "We love Him because He first loved us." It was love that broke down Wesley's regard for conformity and order, fired his devotion and zeal until they became a burning passion, gave him strength to perform labors so constant and so vast in their total as to cause all men to marvel, and above all gave the content to his message with which he searched out the hearts of multitudes of men. We can not well speak of a doctrine of love, but this is the fact,—love is the presupposition which lies behind, makes possible, and explains all those doctrines which are, properly speaking, the distinctive doctrines of Methodism.

Love at the Center of the Christian Religion

2. Redemption is for all. When Methodism was born, a system of doctrine dominated the thought of the Protestant world which held that Jesus Christ died for a chosen and elect few who had been appointed from eternity to be saved,

while the rest of mankind had been left to perish. Against this, the contention of Calvinism, another system, Arminianism, held that the Savior had died for all men, and that God willed the salvation of all. Between these two contentions, there could be no doubt which Methodism would choose. Wesley was an ardent advocate of the Arminian theology. Whitefield, strange to say, was a Calvinist, and he became the founder of a Calvinistic wing of the Methodist movement. Very early, however, it was clearly apparent that Methodism was essentially an expression of the Arminian spirit. The Methodist evangelist knew nothing of any obstruction to the salvation of any man; God's love had planned it, now desired it, and would perfectly accomplish it; man needed it, and only the sinfulness of his heart and the stubbornness of his will prevented it. It was his conviction that he had a message addressed to all, needed by all, and effective for all, which gave force, point, and power to the preaching of the Methodist itinerant.

The Methodist Movement an Expression of the Arminian Spirit

Out of this grew Methodism's great doctrinal conflict. How intense it was is reflected in this statement from Professor Phelps, of Andover, himself a Calvinist authority: "The early Methodist preachers denounced the dogmas of Calvinism with vehemence and scorn; they defied it as an invention of the devil; they denied the limitations of the atoning sacrifice by divine decree, and hewed the way clear to the proclaiming of a free salvation. It gave a ring of gladness to their ministrations; 'the mountains skipped like rams and the little hills like lambs' at the sound of their voices."

The Conflict with Calvinism

3. **Man is free.** As a necessary corollary of the doctrine of universal redemption went that of man's freedom. These have become commonplaces in our day; in Wesley's time they were centers about which fiercest battles raged. There is still need for this historic contention to be preached. Theoretically the struggle

The Sinner's Responsibility

has been won, but practically many a man hides behind the plea that God wills it so—the evil had to be else it would not have been. Methodism holds that back of every evil deed is the doer, out of whose evil will the deed sprang, and who himself is responsible for the doing of it.

4. Man may be assured of his salvation. This is the doctrine of assurance, or the witness of the Spirit. In Wesley's day "religion was largely an opinion, or a philosophy, held with more or less regard to its practical consequences, or a creed to be professed, but not experienced. Methodism came with its insistence upon vital religion, preaching it as a fact of heart life consciously known, definitely experienced." So Methodists have always held that a soul which has been forgiven, has entered into peace with God, and is accepted as a child of God, may possess the confident assurance of his sonship. With the Methodist his "religious experience is fused into a volume of holy confidence and joy."

The Witness of the Spirit

5. The Christian must live a holy life. Wesley conceived it a chief part of the mission of Methodism to "spread Scriptural holiness over the land." The early itinerants constantly preached the necessity and the possibility for a holy life. "They preached the thing itself, rather than theories concerning it; they conceded all that their opponents could logically ask, insisting only that the divine action upon a human soul might enable a man to live holily in this present life." This teaching of the Church has been misunderstood and misinterpreted; the experience has been caricatured and carried into fanaticism; but the truth remains that a holy God sent His sinless Son into this world of sinners, somehow by His life and death to lift these sinners into such holiness of heart and life that they will be fit to live with Him eternally. But it is not the doctrine for which she contends, and certainly not any pet phraseology or hard and fast definitions. It

Absolute Righteousness

is the experience as a vital possession of the soul manifesting itself in a life of love fulfilling the law.

6. Summary. In these living truths Methodism found the center, the norm, and the inspiration of its theology. It did not undertake to thrash over again the questions settled in the great ecclesiastical battles of the centuries and formulated in the Articles of Religion. It simply accepted them and proceeded with its passionate labors for the salvation of men. It developed a type of preaching of its own—a type that presented the central saving truths of the gospel that have to do with salvation with an amazing evangelistic fervor.

Methodist Type of Preaching

III. The Articles of Religion

In the forefront of the Discipline stand the Articles of Religion as the confession of faith of Methodists. These are fixed and unalterable. No power in the Church can change or amend them. Curiously enough, we look in vain here for anything peculiarly or technically Methodist. Those views which are commonly regarded as the peculiar heritage of Methodism are not herein set forth. Wesley framed these twenty-five Articles by an abridgement of the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England. His immediate object was to define the doctrinal position of the new organization with reference to the Church from which it had separated itself. He had no particular liking for hard and fast codification of Christian belief. It was necessary, however, that some standard of doctrinal truth be set forth to guard against ignorant, irresponsible, and loose statements in preaching and teaching. These Articles are an expression of the common belief of evangelical Christians of all denominations. Peaceful as they appear in our time, "every one of them had been in its day a battlefield. . . . On one of these Articles we see Augustine rallying around him the people of God out of a decaying empire; on another we see Jerome bringing to-

Our Formal Confession of Faith

gether the books of the Bible and arranging the Canon; on another stands 'Athanasius against the world;' others bring before us Martin Luther, and bold John Knox, and clear-sighted John Calvin. These Articles are not the dry bones of death; they are the 'faith of our fathers living still.'"

IV. A Recent Statement of Faith

The following statement of Bishop E. G. Andrews, contained in the Episcopal Address to the General Conference of 1904, repeated four years later by Bishop Goodsell, and recently read by Bishop Hendrix in the Episcopal Address to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, was unchallenged and is worthy of remembrance:

"We believe in one living and personal God, the Father Almighty, who in perfect wisdom, holiness, and love pervades, sustains, and rules the world which He made. We believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, in whom dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, who was in glory with the Father before all worlds, who became flesh and dwelt among us, the brightness of the glory of God and the express image of His person, who died for our sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, who rose from the dead, who ascended on high, having received all power in heaven and on earth for the completion by grace and judgment of the Kingdom of God. We believe in the Holy Ghost, very and eternal God, the Lord and Giver of life, by whose operation on men dead in trespasses and sins they are quickened to repentance, faith, and loving obedience, are made aware of their sonship, and are empowered to rise into the full stature of men in Christ Jesus. We believe in the impartial love of God to the whole human family, so that none are excluded from the benefits thereof, except as they exclude themselves by willful unbelief and sin. We believe that faith in

Fatherhood of God

Sonship of Jesus Christ

Person of Holy Spirit

Universal Atonement

Christ, the self-surrender of the soul to His government and grace, is the one condition upon which man is reconciled to God, is born again, becomes partaker of the divine nature, and attains sanctification through the spirit. We accept the moral law, confirmed and perfected by the Divine Teacher, and set forth authoritatively in the Holy Scriptures; and we believe in eternal consequences of good and evil, inherent in the constitution of the human soul and declared with solemnity by Him, the final Judge of human life."

New Life

Law and Eternal Consequences

V. Methodism and the Child

There is no subject more vitally related to the work of the Sunday-school teacher than that of the spiritual status of the child. All our religious work with and for the child is conditioned by our view of his relation to the Kingdom of God and his religious needs. It seems fitting, therefore, that this subject should be carefully and somewhat fully presented as a part of this chapter.

The doctrinal statement of the Discipline is as follows: "We hold that all children, by virtue of the unconditional benefits of the atonement, are members of the Kingdom of God, and are therefore graciously entitled to baptism" (Paragraph 49). "Baptism is . . . a sign of regeneration or the new birth. The baptism of young children is to be retained in the Church" (Article of Religion No. 17). These statements clearly indicate the position of the Church. We hold that children are spiritually alive, and because they are regenerate we baptize them.

The Disciplinary Statement

This position is in accord with the teaching of the Master who, when He was asked, "Who is greatest in the Kingdom of heaven?" called a little child unto Him, and set him in the midst of them, and said: "Verily, I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive

one such little child in My name receiveth Me. And whoso offends one of these little ones which believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." We understand the Master's statement to mean: The little child is in the Kingdom of heaven. It believes in Jesus. It is in vital relation to Him. It has a germinal (an undeveloped) spiritual life. Woe unto him that offends (injures or destroys) the spiritual life of one of these little ones.

Our Doctrine Confirmed by Scientific Study

The facts gathered by patient workers in the field of the psychology of religion confirm this teaching of Methodism. The facts show that some children come to consciousness of spiritual life earlier than we had previously thought, and the indications are that the spiritual life was in existence long before it came to consciousness. Spiritual revelations do not come to young children as if they were unnatural. Many very young children seem to be *en rapport* with the spiritual. In their innocence they live in an Eden where God walks and talks. Their ideas of God and the spiritual are, of course, crude, as are all their ideas. But as the Master taught, they believe in Him because they already have a vital relation with Him. The great work of the Sunday-school and a chief function of the Church is to conserve and develop this germinal spiritual life of the children. To keep the child alive spiritually, and growing spiritually, in a well-balanced spiritual development—this is the first and supreme object of the school.

Types of Religious Experience

This is not to say that there will not be experiences of awakening, and in some cases marked transitions, even upheavals such as take place in the traditional conversion experiences. Of course we do not expect or desire that the boy or girl whose spiritual life has been carefully nurtured from earliest years shall have an experience such as is witnessed in the conversion of the adult sinner who, in blindness and deadness

to God goes through a strenuous agony of repentance and turning to God. Such conversions are blessed facts, and must be continued as long as there are adult sinners to be saved. There will be cases in which young people, passing through the storm and stress of early adolescence—a time of physical and mental change when individuality is asserting itself, when new aspirations fire the soul, when personal power is awaking—will, in the midst of tumult, confusion, and distress, hear the voice of Christ saying, "Peace, be still," and realize a great calm, out of which they will move into a strong, confident spiritual life.

With others there will be a spontaneous religious awakening. There had been no clear consciousness of spiritual life, but now the Sun of righteousness arises and it is day. The change is marked, attracts the mind's notice, and lingers in memory. Just as the boy or girl comes to consciousness of physical life and of mental life, so they spontaneously awaken to a consciousness of spiritual life. This is the more natural type of religious experience for the child, and is what we ought especially to seek to assist and to bring about.

Still others will grow up into a strong, developed Christian life without any definite conscious transition. Their inner life in Christ will unfold naturally and continuously through a course of years. The wise worker will make it his endeavor to nurture the spiritual life of the child, supplying the needed food, refrain from demanding or forcing any particular type of experience, assist whatever spiritual process manifests itself, and confidently believe that God in His own way will reveal Himself fully and graciously to His own.

Lesson Outline:

I. Methodism an Expression of Spiritual Life.

II. Distinctive Doctrines
   1. The supremacy of love.
   2. Redemption is for all.
   3. Man is free.

4. Man may be assured of his salvation.
5. The Christian must live a holy life.
6. Summary.

III. The Articles of Religion.
IV. A Recent Statement of Faith.
V. Methodism and the Child.

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Topics for Special Study:

1. Arminianism as a theology.
2. Wesley's teaching on love.

Topics for Class Discussion:

1. How did Methodism as a religious movement begin?
2. What was Wesley's relation to theological formulation?
3. Why has every Church a creed?
4. How were the distinctive doctrines of Methodism formed?
5. What great truth is central in Methodism?
6. What is Methodism's doctrine of universal redemption?
7. What does Methodism hold in regard to man's freedom?
8. What is the teaching of Methodism concerning assurance?
9. What is the position of the Church with regard to a holy life?
10. What was the origin of the Articles of Religion?
11. What is the teaching of the Church concerning the spiritual status of children?
12. What is the supreme work to be done for children by the Sunday-school?

CHAPTER XIV

METHODISM AS A CHURCH ORGANIZATION

The polity of Methodism is peculiar unto itself. The form of organization was not borrowed or adapted from any other Church, but has resulted from a gradual process of development as circumstances and needs have demanded. The first Methodist societies were companies of men and women "without ecclesiastical functions or pretensions" "united in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love that they might help each other work out their salvation." American Methodism at first followed the early pattern, but, compelled by the changed conditions which resulted from the Revolution, a simple Church Constitution was adopted. Out of this has grown the present complete and admirable form of organization.

Development of Our Church Polity

The polity is democratic enough to give a sense of responsibility to every member, and freedom to each sane personality for development and activity. On the other hand, it is autocratic enough to secure high efficiency in organization and work. It is a happy, and, we may well believe, a providential combination of the two principles. Wesley insisted, and the Methodist Church believes, that no one particular form of Church polity is enjoined in the New Testament. We are therefore enabled to hold to our polity as the best possible expression of Methodist life, and the best channel for Methodist activity, and yet have no quarrel with any other form of Church government that does not do injury to the Kingdom of God.

Characteristics of Our Form of Organization

I. Distinctive Features of Polity

1. Connexionalism. The Methodist Episcopal Church is a denominational unit. The Church now has Conferences or Mission Conferences in the United States, Mexico, Europe, Africa, South America, China, India, Korea, and Malaysia, yet it is one Church. This is in contrast to what is commonly known as the Congregational polity, in which the local Church is the unit; thus the denomination is not one Church, but an aggregate of Churches. With the Baptists, the Congregationalists, the Unitarians, the Universalists, and largely, also, the Presbyterians, the various Churches of a district, a State, or a country are grouped together into an association. The Methodist Episcopal Church is not in any sense an association of Conferences or of local Churches, but one body of which its Conferences and societies are component parts.

The Church is One

2. The itinerancy. This term has reference primarily to the method of assignment of the preachers to their fields of labor. In contrast to the "settled" pastorates of other Churches, the Methodist Episcopal Church has an itinerancy, or traveling ministry. From this has arisen the term "traveling preacher," the name by which the Methodist minister in active service is technically known. "Under this system, at the outset, the preacher relinquishes the right of absolutely deciding as to his field of labor, and the Churches also surrender the right of absolutely deciding who shall be their pastor. Consultation is freely allowed, but the final determination, or fixing of the appointment, is with the bishop. The reason for this is that *every Church may have a pastor and every pastor an appointment.* This feature, although it has its drawbacks and occasionally results in hardships to Church or pastor, works out to the great practical advantage of both the ministry and the Church.

Methodist System of Appointments

II. The Conferences[1]

1. The General Conference. The General Conference, an elective body which meets every four years, limited only by six restrictive rules, enacts legislation, adopts rules and regulations, and elects the bishops and general officers of the Church. It determines the constitution, the scope and methods of operation of the various boards of the Church. It fixes the boundaries of the Annual Conferences; indicates where the bishops shall reside; and does whatever becomes necessary within the scope of its powers to give effectiveness to all the agencies of the denomination.

Constitution and Powers of the General Conference

Originally composed entirely of ministers, in 1872 laymen were admitted; in 1900 the numbers of lay and ministerial delegates was made equal. Women are now admitted as delegates.

2. The Annual Conferences. The Annual Conferences are made up of ministers only. All traveling preachers in full connection are members of some Annual Conference. In 1908 there were one hundred and thirty-two Annual Conferences, and as the Church continues to grow the number is increased. A Conference includes all circuits, stations, and districts within the geographical limit fixed for it by the General Conference. The business of the Annual Conference is administrative and judicial; it deals with the character, qualifications, and general fitness of the ministers for their work. A bishop usually presides. Membership in the Annual Conference is acquired by recommendation from the District or Quarterly Conference; serving two years on trial in active service, and passing satisfactory examinations in the Conference course of study. This Conference is not a delegated body. The members are not delegates, but members—their membership in

Membership and Functions of the Annual Conferences

[1]The remaining sections of this chapter are abridged from the "Digest of Methodist Law," by Merrill, a work of recognized authority, to the publishers of which, the Methodist Book Concern, we hereby acknowledge our indebtedness.

the Church is there. Every effective member in full connection or on probation receives an appointment from the bishop at the time of the Conference session.

3. The Quarterly Conference. The Quarterly Conference is the highest authority in the local charge for purposes of Church administration. Its membership is made up of traveling and local preachers in the charge, the exhorters, stewards, class leaders, trustees, superintendents of the Sunday-schools, presidents of the Epworth Leagues, superintendents of the Junior Leagues, presidents of the Methodist Brotherhoods, presidents of the Ladies' Aid Societies, and deaconesses employed within the charge.

Duties of the Quarterly Conference

The chief business of the Quarterly Conference is: (1) To hear complaints, and to receive and try charges; (2) To take cognizance of all local preachers and exhorters of the charge; (3) To receive the annual report of the trustees; to elect trustees where the laws of the State permit, otherwise to approve; (4) To elect stewards for the charge, also a district steward and a recording steward; (5) To confirm or reject Sunday-school superintendents nominated by the Sunday-school Board; (6) To have general oversight of all Sunday-schools, Epworth Leagues, Methodist Brotherhoods, and Ladies' Aid Societies within the charge; (7) To meet its obligations in reference to the support of the ministry and our denominational benevolent causes.

The Quarterly Conference, as the highest authority in the local Church, ought to be respected and rendered powerful in its sphere. Its work, however formal and seemingly unimpressive, is of vital interest to the Church, and should command the attention of all who really love the work of God.

4. The District Conference. The District Conference is held only in such districts as elect to have it. When established it exercises some of the powers otherwise delegated to the Quarterly Conference.

III. The Ministry

1. Exhorters. In Methodism it is common to license men to exhort before they are licensed to preach. The exhorter is the helper of the pastor. He is licensed by him and is subject to his direction. It is his duty to hold meetings for prayer and exhortation whenever opportunity is afforded. Receiving an exhorter's license has commonly been, in the past, the first step toward the ministry.

2. Local preachers. The Quarterly or District Conference licenses local preachers on recommendation of the society of which they are members, or of the leaders' and stewards' meeting. They are laymen who are given authority by the Church to preach. When the first Methodist local preacher was licensed it was a great innovation; previously for centuries all public religious exercises had been conducted exclusively by clergymen. "No layman had ever prayed in public until the Methodist revival, and for a layman to expound the Scriptures or preach a sermon was unheard of." Lay preaching was so pronounced a success that soon Methodism had large numbers of lay preachers. Their service to the Church and to the Kingdom in an evangelistic way has been invaluable. The custom originated by Methodism has been widely adopted by other Churches; many and various are the doors of opportunity open to-day to the local preacher.

The Beginning of Lay Preaching

After four years of acceptable service the local preacher may, if it seems desirable, on the fulfillment of certain conditions, be ordained as a local deacon. This ordination empowers him to baptize and to assist in the administration of the Communion. After two years as a deacon he may be ordained a local elder.

3. Traveling preachers. The word traveling is used in contradistinction to the word local; the traveling preacher is one who gives all his time to the work of the ministry, and is a member of an Annual Conference. Preachers on

trial, and those employed as "supplies" may travel circuits and do all the work of traveling preachers, but still they are not traveling preachers in the technical sense.

Preachers are first admitted to the Annual Conference on trial; after two years, if they have done acceptable work and have passed the required examinations, they may be admitted into full connection, and be elected and ordained deacons. After two additional years of service, with the passing of an examination on a prescribed course of study each year, they may be elected and ordained elders. This completes the process of examination and ordination, and brings them into the list of effective traveling elders. These are the only two orders in the ministry recognized by our Church. The bishop in our Church does not, as in the Roman Catholic and the Protestant Episcopal Churches, belong to a third and higher order above the other clergy, but is simply an elder set apart to the office of bishop.

Methodist Orders

The traveling preacher in the regular course of things is appointed as pastor or preacher-in-charge. The pastor's duty is to superintend the spiritual and temporal interests of the Church under his care. He has oversight of the local preachers in the charge, the class leaders, and the exhorters. He is charged with special responsibility as regards the religious instruction of children, the circulation of religious literature, and the presentation of the benevolences of the Church. The pastor's duties are manifold—more than one hundred are specifically stated in the Discipline—much is required of him, and in many respects his position is difficult and exacting. He should have the hearty sympathy and support of every member of the Church.

The Pastor's Work

4. District Superintendents. Each Annual Conference is divided into a number of districts, and over each is appointed a district superintendent. The appointment is made annually by the presiding bishop. Commonly a district superintendent is appointed to the same district for six successive

years, which is the limit of term for any one district. It is through the district superintendent the bishop obtains the knowledge of the preachers and charges that guides him in making the appointments; indeed, in the very nature of the case they are largely influential in the appointments. They are the leaders of the preachers, and the Churches, and the communities in moral reforms and benevolent enterprises, and exert a powerful influence upon the Church. The office is one sometimes underestimated by our people; it has great possibilities of usefulness, and is an indispensable part of our Church polity.

Importance of District Superintendency

5. **Bishops.** The episcopacy in Methodism is unique. It claims neither "divine right" nor "apostolic succession." It is a general superintendency. The bishops are elected by the General Conference without limit as to time, and are set apart by solemn consecration, investing them with an authority that would be amazing but for the guards and checks and amenability that accompany the office. The superintendency is general in the case of each bishop, extending to the remotest boundaries of the Church in all lands. An exception is made in the case of the missionary bishops, who exercise episcopal functions and authority only within a specified territory. The bishops preside in the Annual Conferences, decide all questions of law involved in its proceedings, ordain deacons and elders, and fix the appointments of the pastors. This democratic episcopate has maintained administrative uniformity through world-wide expansion; has perpetuated a sentiment of unity by its living, omnipresent embodiment of that unity, and by its high character, and especially its pre-eminent preachers, has elevated quality of the Church's ministry.

Our General Superintendency

IV. Local Church Officials, Boards, and Committees

1. **Class leaders.** The class leader is a sub-pastor charged with responsibility of oversight for the spiritual life

of the members of his class, whom he is expected to meet regularly in the class-meeting, and to visit. He is thus a sub-pastor, and if he takes his appointment seriously, may become a spiritual helper of wide usefulness. Class leaders are appointed by the pastor.

Sub-Pastor

2. The stewards. The stewards, of whom there may not be less than three, nor more than twenty-one, in any charge, are elected by the Quarterly Conference on nomination of the pastor. Their duties are both spiritual and financial. These are explicitly stated in the Discipline. If they are persons who "both know and love Methodism," faithful, devout, zealous, blameless in life, they are a right arm of power, both to the pastor and to the Church.

Duties and Character of Stewards

The leaders and stewards of a charge may be brought together in a leaders' and stewards' meeting, but the functions of this meeting are now usually discharged by the Official Board.

3. The trustees. State or Territorial laws in some cases specify the mode of electing trustees. When the law does not make such specification, trustees are elected by the Quarterly Conference or by the membership. Two-thirds of the Board of Trustees, composed of not less than three nor more than nine persons, must be members of our Church. All must be over twenty-one years. Their official duties are secular, relating to the property of the Church; they are to hold, control, and care for the property of the Church, and all this in trust for the Church and in obedience to the Discipline.

The Trustee's Office

4. Official Board. It is left to the choice of the Quarterly Conference of each circuit or station whether it will have an Official Board or not. As to membership, it is, in effect, the Quarterly Conference without the district superintendent. It may consider all the questions that belong to the leaders' and stewards' meeting, as prescribed by the Discipline;

Functions of the Official Board

it may also devise and carry into effect suitable plans for providing for the finances of the Church. This latter is its most important function. It may also "discharge such duties as the Quarterly Conference may, from time to time, direct."

5. Local Sunday-school Board. There should be a Sunday-school Board for each Sunday-school in the circuit or station. The Board consists of the pastor, ex-officio chairman, the Sunday-school Committee appointed by the Quarterly Conference, the superintendent, the assistant superintendent, heads of departments, the duly elected secretaries, treasurer, and librarians, the teachers, the assistant teachers regularly nominated and elected, and the president of the Sunday-school Missionary Society. It is the duty of the Board to nominate the superintendent, to organize the school into a temperance society, and to provide, in collaboration with the superintendent, for the taking of a collection at least once a year for the Board of Sunday Schools. The Discipline makes the organization of the local Sunday-school Board mandatory; it should therefore be a part of the working machinery of each Church, and as such it may be made of large usefulness.

Membership and Duties of Sunday-School Board

6. Standing Committees. Each charge is to have, according to the provisions of the Discipline, standing committees on the following subjects: Foreign Missions, Home Missions and Church Extension, Sunday-schools, Tracts, Temperance, Education, Freedmen's Aid, hospitals, Church records; on auditing accounts, parsonages and furniture, Church music, and on estimating the pastor's salary and allowances for Conference Claimants.

Lesson Outline:

I. Distinctive Features of Polity.
   1. Connexionalism.
   2. The itinerancy.

II. The Conferences.
   1. The General Conference.
   2. The Annual Conference.
   3. The Quarterly Conference.
   4. The District Conference.

III. The Ministry.
   1. Exhorters.
   2. Local preachers.
   3. Traveling preachers.
   4. District superintendents.
   5. Bishops.

IV. Local Church Officials, Boards, and Committees.
   1. Class leaders.
   2. The stewards.
   3. The trustees.
   4. Official Board.
   5. Local Sunday-school Board.
   6. Standing committees.

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Topics for Special Study:

1. Distinctive features of Methodist Episcopal polity.
2. Advantages and disadvantages of the Methodist system of pastoral appointments.

Topics for Class Discussion:

1. How did our Church organization come to be?
2. Characterize our Church polity.
3. What is meant by the "connexionalism" of Methodism?
4. What are the peculiar features of the Methodist itinerancy?

5. What is the General Conference, and what is its work?
6. Give the important particulars concerning the Annual Conference.
7. Who are members of the Quarterly Conference? What are its duties?
8. How many orders are recognized in the Methodist ministry?
9. What is the significance of the term "traveling preacher?" What is the pastor's work?
10. State the distinctive characteristics of our Methodist episcopate.
11. Name and describe the duties of the various officials and Boards of the local Church.

CHAPTER XV

PRESENT AND FUTURE OF METHODISM

There has never been a time since the beginning of Methodism when the future was more truly assured or evidences of inherent strength and power were more abundant than at the present. Perhaps not all would agree with this statement. There are discouraged spirits who hold that the Church is now decadent. Dr. Daniel Dorchester relates that when he began his ministry he heard people croak about "old-fashioned Methodism." He asked his father, who entered the ministry in 1816, if there was any such talk then. He replied that there was and that it was echoed very dolefully. Then he asked an uncle whose ministry began in 1800 if at that early time there was such complaining. "Yes," he said, "I remember it well; and a member of the class I first joined had been a housekeeper of John Wesley. She said she had heard that kind of talk years before in England. The pessimist can always find ground to support his contentions.

The Future Assured

Times are constantly changing; we face to-day radically different conditions than confronted our fathers; there must inevitably be new methods and the adaptation of time-honored agencies. To one who has a present faith there are not lacking evidences of the strength of the Church to-day, and reasons for large hope of to-morrow.

I. Recent Developments Which Evidence the Vitality and Power of the Church

1. The deaconess movement. This movement which enlists women in organized religious work had its rise among German Methodists. Mrs. Lucy Rider Meyer was

the first person to give practical direction to the work in America. The growth of the movement has been almost phenomenal. The first training-school under deaconess direction in the United States was organized in 1885. In 1910 there were three forms of deaconess administration—the Methodist Deaconess Association; the Deaconess Department of the Woman's Home Missionary Society; the German Central Deaconess Board. The deaconess property and endowment amounted to $5,325,069. Licensed deaconesses numbered 1,068. The Methodist Deaconess Association included forty-one separate institutions. The movement has already proven to be of the widest usefulness, and its sphere is constantly broadening.

Organized Women's Work

2. Hospitals and general philanthropy. As recently as January 27, 1881, the *Christian Advocate* said concerning the Methodist Episcopal Church: "It is to-day without a hospital, a bed in a hospital, or a dispensary. . . . Is it not time that somewhere we build an asylum or a hospital?" Soon afterward the first Methodist hospital in America, the Brooklyn Hospital, was established. By 1910, thirty-five thousand patients had received treatment in its wards and rooms. The Year Book for 1910 lists twenty-one other hospitals established during the intervening years.

The Advance in Philanthropy

No other philanthropic work more truly exemplifies the Spirit of Christ than that which makes provision for orphaned and destitute children. The Church has sixteen institutions under its fostering care maintained in behalf of this object. This same publication gives account of twelve homes for the aged. By means of these philanthropic agencies, and others not mentioned, the Church of to-day is in true gospel fashion making full proof of its ministry.

3. The Federation for Social Service. A distinctively modern development in the Church is the Federation for Social Service, which has arisen from a deepened sense of

brotherhood, an increased sense of responsibility on the part of Christians for the rights and welfare of others, and an increased realization that the gospel calls its disciples to service in behalf of all men and all of man. Thus it may be seen that this organization is but the crystallizing of ideas and convictions which are themselves the manifestation of a new consciousness and a new life. The author of "The Genius of Methodism" makes this statement: "Not enough is it to snatch a few brands from the burning, but the primary need is to spiritualize all souls within the range of its influence; not enough to convert individuals, but environment must be transformed; not enough to triumph in one land or among one race, but the whole world must be won to the Christ-life. In moments of enthusiasm have these ideas been recognized from the first; under their impulse have time and money and life been given. All this, however, in but an impulsive way, without a clear and definite recognition of the full significance of the problem. But now, under the influence of new thinking, Methodism is arousing to an adequate recognition of its call to catholicity, to an exercise of an influence as wide as the human race."

New Social Consciousness

II. The Spirit of Union

The right of private judgment, one of the fruits of the Reformation, and the spirit of liberty that was developed later, became a divisive force in all the Churches of the free countries. This tendency seemed to reach its culmination in America, where the Christian body was divided up, as some one has said, "into sects and insects," so small are some of them.

1. **Tendency to union.** To-day there is a positive and rapidly-moving reaction. It is so in harmony with the highest—the essential spirit of Christianity—love; and is so confirmed by the more intelligent judgment of the day, that division is weakness, and that in union there is strength;

and is seen to be so thoroughly in answer to the prayer of the common Lord of all—that His followers might be one even as He and the Father are one—that it seems likely the present-day tendency toward unity will grow into greater power, and not only bring the denominations of Christendom into a more fraternal spirit and a closer fellowship of faith and works, but also in time into a coalescence and union of related organizations.

A Growing Oneness

Nowhere is this tendency and spirit stronger than in the different branches of Methodism. They are so one in experience, spirit, and doctrine, and so little unlike in minor aspects of polity, that it seems reasonable to expect that they will be gradually coming together again in one home, baptized into the one Spirit of their one Lord and Master Jesus Christ.

2. Unity in fact. Already there are signs of this unity in the genuine spirit of fraternity manifest when fraternal delegates appear at the different Conferences; but more positive indications are seen in the union of the different Methodisms in Canada and Japan; the fact that the different divisions are making overtures of peace and unity; and that the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, are federated in using a common Catechism, a common Hymnal and order of worship, in maintaining a common publishing house in China, and common educational institutions in several places.

Union Accomplished

3. Ecumenical Conferences. Perhaps the most positive indication and hopeful promise of this unity is seen in the series of Ecumenical Methodist Conferences that has been held, in which the whole family of Methodists, by either representatives or fraternal delegates, has met together for days and weeks in high and holy conference about their common interests and the extension of the one Kingdom of God on earth.

The first of these Ecumenical Conferences and the "first reunion of the scattered branches of Methodism assembled

in City Road, London, Wednesday, September 7, 1881." For convenience it was made up of two sections, the eastern, composed of the ten branches of Methodism in the Old World, and the western, composed of the eighteen divisions in the New World. It was estimated that six million members and nearly twenty million adherents were represented. Without legislative authority it discussed the history, results, evangelistic agencies, and perils of Methodism. Larger thoughts and holier feelings were born.

First Ecumenical Conference

In 1884, in commemoration of the first organization of American Methodism, a Centennial Conference of all bodies of American Methodism was held. It continued in session seventeen days. A large number of topics was discussed in papers and addresses that are preserved in a volume of permanent value. But, best of all, it made clear in many minds the vision of one Methodism in America, and made it the prayer of many hearts.

Centennial Conference

The second Ecumenical Conference was held in Washington in October, 1891. Five hundred delegates were present. Dr. Buckley reminds us that the bishops of our Church said "no one who attended the meetings can ever forget the deep and genuine enthusiasm and glowing religious spirit which continued without abatement throughout" the fourteen days. "It is gratifying to record that brothers without distinction of color mingled with easy cordiality and without any apparent discrimination, not only at the communion table, but both in the presidency on the platform and in speeches on the floor."

Second Ecumenical Conference

Again was the vision of one Methodism the world round made clear; and the desire for it strengthened in many souls. The third Ecumenical Conference was held in London in September, 1901. The spirit of unity was even more pronounced than in former years. Plans are now under way for the fourth Ecumenical Conference in 1911. It is hoped that the spirit

Third Ecumenical Conference

of unity may begin in some way to take form and that this century may see Methodism, that was so sadly divided in the last century, made one in Jesus Christ.

III. Statistical Exhibit of Present-day Methodism

Statistics can tell only a little of the real results of the marvelous movement called Methodism. We give here only the totals of recently published statistical tables.

1. The Methodist Episcopal Church.

General Superintendents.	
Effective	19
Superannuated	3
Missionary Bishops.	
Effective	6
Superannuated	1
Itinerant Ministers	19,597
Local Preachers	15,030
Epworth League Members (Junior and Senior)	808,963
Membership of Church	3,442,631
Sunday-school Enrollment	3,849,658
Total Official Benevolent Collections, 1909	$3,579,226
Total for Ministerial Support, 1909	$15,178,015
Educational Property and Endowment	$40,001,248
Value of Churches and Parsonages	$203,849,831

2. Ecumenical Methodism.

Membership in Canada	384,637
Membership in Methodist Churches of the United States	6,838,779
Membership in Old World Methodist Churches	1,380,442
Total of Methodists in the World	8,603,858
Estimated Adherents of Methodism	30,000,000

Lesson Outline:

I. Recent Developments which Evidence the Vitality and Power of the Church.
   1. The Deaconess Movement.
   2. Hospitals and general philanthropy.
   3. The Federation for Social Service.

II. The Spirit of Union.
   1. Tendency to union.
   2. Unity in fact.
   3. Ecumenical Conferences.

III. Statistical Exhibit of Present-day Methodism.
   1. The Methodist Episcopal Church.
   2. Ecumenical Methodism.

Bibliography:

Year Book of the Board of Sunday Schools, 1909.
The Methodist Year Book, 1910.

Topics for Special Study:

1. Basis of Methodist union.
2. The Church and social problems.

Topics for Class Discussion:

1. Can any live organization remain unchanged?
2. Is not the ability of the Church to adapt itself to modern conditions an evidence of healthfulness?
3. What is the Deaconess Movement?
4. Tell of the advance of the Church in general philanthropy.
5. What has given rise to the new interest in social service?
6. What ground of hope is there for the reunion of the two Methodisms in the United States?